THE PRACTICE STORY-TELLING CLASS

FRANCES WELD DANIELSON

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To Eddie From Nellie
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SUGGESTIONS, THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF AN IMAGINARY CLASS, TO ASSIST LEADERS IN MEETING TYPICAL OBJECTIONS, TO ILLUSTRATE THE KIND OF RESPONSE TO BE EXPECTED AND HOW THIS RESPONSE MAY GUIDE THE CLASS THOUGHT

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FOREWORD

Story-telling will always be an art indispensable to the teacher of children. While it is no longer the method which eclipses all others in religious education, nevertheless, the teacher who tells stories charmingly and happily is likely to be the one best able to lead her group in creative activities of many kinds. There is a release, a spirit of adventure, a stimulation of the imagination which comes to a group lost in a good story, and such attitudes are conducive to unselfconsciousness in the initiation of and participation in other fruitful enterprises.

This little book reflects the charming manner and informal approach of the author, who has told stories to children for many years and helped other teachers to find joy in taking their children into the realm of make-believe. It depicts through conversation the progress of the members of a class in story-telling. They are told at the outset that they are not going to study the *values* or the *uses* of the story, but are simply going to *learn how to tell stories.* And they begin at once to learn! The reader follows the various members of the group through their efforts to make a giant seem tall, a little boy tired, a thirsty flower glad for the rain. He listens to the criticisms of the group, and sees how the story-tellers profit by

them. He hears the timid member of the class forget herself completely in telling the story of Epaminondas so delightfully that her hearers laugh unrestrainedly. He actually feels the "growing pains" of the students as they overcome their prejudices and try out new ways of telling stories. In fact, he feels so much a part of the group that it is almost impossible to resist the desire to try out his own hand in making an attractive beginning for the story of the brave little boy.

The book does, indeed, teach itself. Abstract discussion of principles is reduced to a minimum; rather, principles are clothed in the colorful dress of actual use in bits of narration. By acting upon the suggestions offered and comparing one's effort with that of the members of the story-telling group whose activities are recorded, a leader of children will find herself overcoming her shyness and developing confidence and joy in telling stories.

MARY ALICE JONES

CONTENTS

CLASS SESSIONS

		PAGE
I.	Student Initiative — Comparison	1
II.	Gesture	7
III.	Action	12
IV.	Stories Full of Action — Illustration and Mimicry	20
V.	Stories Illustrating Mimicry — Repetition	26
VI.	Repetition — Rhymes and Emphasis	33
VII.	Stories That Appeal — Contrast	38
VIII.	Humorous Stories — Arousing Feeling	43
IX.	Fairy Tales — The Moral — Familiar Words	48
X.	Fables — Amplifying	52
XI.	Details	57
XII.	Over-explanation	62
XIII.	Preparation — Beginnings and Endings	67
XIV.	Group Stories	75
XV.	Direct Discourse	79
XVI.	Gaining Attention — Questions — Pauses	84
XVII.	Bible Stories	91
XVIII.	A Final Story and Story Sources	98

THE PRACTICE STORY-TELLING CLASS

I

STUDENT INITIATIVE — COMPARISON

Leader: The purpose of this class is to make good story-tellers. We shall not theorize; we shall practice. We shall not argue about the teaching power of stories; we shall learn how to tell them. We have come here not to listen merely but to work.

Diffidence: We shan't have to tell stories before the class for criticism, shall we? I never could.

Leader: You will not have to for some time. When we come to that kind of practice, you will be ready.

Sluggard: Why, I supposed *you* would tell stories and we'd get points from listening. I expected to be held spellbound.

Leader: And you thought I'd be satisfied with your applause? No; I'm not here to entertain. I shall only be contented when you have held me spellbound.

Cynic: Story-tellers are born, not made. I wasn't born one, and I challenge you to make me one.

Leader: I accept the challenge. Describe to me the born story-teller.

Cynic: She has the dramatic gift. She makes you see the things she talks about. Her characters

live. You hate them or love them. Why, once I heard a really great story-teller, and after she had finished I was surprised enough to find my cheeks wet with tears. I hadn't had the slightest idea that I was crying. Now, do you suppose I could ever do that to any one?

Leader: I do, because in six sentences you made me see a great story-teller, and if you succeeded in doing that, you can tell a story. That's all there is to it, anyway, just what you said — making our listeners see and feel what we see and feel, making them live in our stories. I shall try my best to help you accomplish this.

We will begin with very simple tests. First, how can you make little children realize height? Describe a giant, so I shall see him.

Ready-to-Try: Once there was a big, tall man.

Leader: I don't see him.

Ready-to-Try: He was very tall.

Leader: I don't care.

Quick-as-a-Flash: Don't you care if he was as tall as the moon?

Leader: Yes; I do. Now you've done it. You've given me something with which to measure my giant. Can somebody do this without exaggeration?

Ready-to-Try: A giant is at least a foot taller than a tall man.

Leader: You forget that I'm posing as a small child, and that to me a foot means only the foot on the end of a leg.

Sluggard: A giant is taller than the tallest man you ever saw. Once a giant stood by a man and he put his elbow on the man's head.

Quick-as-a-Flash: Once there was a giant, and he was as tall as this (*raising her hand high above her head*).

Cynic: There was a giant who was so tall that when he lay down he had to put his feet out of the window.

Leader: Splendid! Do you know what you three have done? You've used comparison and gesture and action, to make me see your giant. All of them are good story-telling methods.

Ready-to-Try: I can't draw but (*sketching hastily a pigmy and a tall man*) here's another way — illustration. Or you could hold up a picture.

Leader: True! The only trouble with these methods is that your children's eyes would be on the picture instead of on you. There are certain things however that must be pictured to be clear to a child who never has seen them, such as — well, what?

Ready-to-Try: A camel.

Quick-as-a-Flash: Yes, I see; but when you use words it's better, because then you don't lose your grip on your audience. Let's do some other stunts. I like this!

Leader: Name the four methods you used in making me see a giant.

Class: Comparison, gesture, action, illustration.

Leader: Think of something else you can make vivid through comparison.

Ready-to-Try: Once there was a cat, children, that looked like a small tiger.

Quick-as-a-Flash: That's silly. Every child knows what a cat is, but very few have heard of tigers.

Cynic: You'd better call your tiger a big fierce cat.

Leader: You are certainly teaching yourselves, for to describe the unfamiliar by the familiar is an axiom in story-telling. Take a sheep, for instance — an animal not known to a great many children. Can you use comparison to make that animal vivid?

Diffidence: Once there was a sheep. It was like a big, soft dog, only it had soft white wool instead of hair.

Quick-as-a-Flash: I wouldn't go at it that way. I'd ask what children had seen sheep — for lots have in parks — and make them describe the sheep.

Leader: Best of all. To draw on the children's knowledge is good pedagogy, but wouldn't that interrupt your story?

Ready-to-Try: I'd get the sheep all described before I began.

Leader: Another fine point. Clear up unfamiliar story objects before you tell your story. Marie Shedlock tells of an Irish girl to whom the "buffalo" of a tale meant an old "buffer" named "Lo"!

But let's get back to comparison. Will you use it in regard to color?

Chorus: Green as grass!
White as milk!
Black as your shoe!
Red as fire!

Leader: How about size?

Chorus: Fat as a pig.
Big as an elephant.
Thin as a match.

Leader: How about other qualities?

Chorus: Sharp as a razor.
Round as a ball.
Dull as a hoe.
Dry as dust.

Leader: Can we describe virtues and faults by comparison?

Chorus: Cross as a bear.
Gentle as a dove.
Stupid as an owl.
Wild as a hawk.

Leader: Do you think comparison adds vividness to stories? I will give a sentence that I wish somebody would make picturesque by the use of comparison: A little girl was so cross that her face turned red.

Quick-as-a-Flash: A little girl was as cross as a bear, so that her face looked as if it were on fire.

Leader: Remember to take care that your comparisons are to things well known by your children.

Remember that too many are bewildering. But remember, too, that comparison is a very useful method in vivid story-telling. Read well-told stories and look for comparisons, and come next week prepared to give me the result of your research.

II

GESTURE

Leader: After you have given me examples of the use of comparison in stories, we will talk about the second point in story-telling that you mentioned — gesture.

Since gesture is an aid to story-telling, I suppose we might stop now and take some exercises which will make us graceful.

Sluggard: Oh, *no!*

Leader: But surely we should perfect ourselves in the art of gesturing?

Diffidence: Grandmother never gestured when she told stories, and we listened always.

Leader: Then you think it undesirable?

Cynic: If it is desirable, there's another indication that I was never born to be a story-teller, for I certainly never could or would gesture.

Leader: Excuse the digression, but how wide is that crocheted edge you knit so well?

Cynic (*measuring an inch with two fingers*)*:* About so wide.

Leader: Ah! then you don't mind using a very simple gesture?

Quick-as-a-Flash: That to me is just the point.

When a gesture is spontaneous and unpremeditated, it's adapted to story-telling, but studied gestures are absurd.

Leader: You are exactly right. The charm and essence of story-telling is its simplicity. We are not holding this class in order to make you self-conscious, but so that you may forget yourselves. Think a moment. With whom do you find yourselves gesturing?

Ready-to-Try: Foreigners. And we'd do the same with foreign children or little children who did not know many words. I'd say *so* high (*gesturing*), and *so* wide, and *so* long.

Sluggard: An easy way to make a child see anything round is to make its shape with your hands.

Quick-as-a-Flash: Or you can use motions. You can make the sea appear calm by moving your hand along quietly, or make it seem rough by moving your hand up and down. Or you can act out going upstairs. Why, touching imaginary steps with your hands makes you fairly see a person go up — Elisha, for instance.

Diffidence: Even I might tell the story of the fishermen, if I could make believe pull in nets.

Leader: Would you ever leave your seat to act out your story? I mean, pass to and fro, kneel, or anything of that sort?

Cynic: That would be ridiculous. You'd be an actor and not a story-teller.

Leader: Might some story-tellers use gesture more naturally than others?

Sluggard: Some that like action better than I do.

Leader: Always remember that story-telling must be natural to be effective. Some people talk with their hands, unconsciously. But there are classes of children with whom gestures help, and gestures that put life into certain events for all children. Would gesture help in making the rain vivid?

Cynic: It certainly seems to me that anything so commonplace as rain might be described by simply saying, "It rained."

Leader: Do you recall in *Middlemarch* the description of the thundershower during Mr. Ladislaw's proposal to Dorothea? George Eliot might have simply stated the fact that it thundered; instead, she makes it a very effective setting for the scene. In a very small way that's what we attempt to do in story-telling. Who can, through gestures, make me stop and watch the rain, and actually feel something about it — glad or sorry, or, at least, interested?

Diffidence: Even I can do that. The rain came down and down and down and down (*representing this descent with her fingers*).

Quick-as-a-Flash: I'd much rather say, "The rain came down, *pitter, patter, pitter, patter.*"

Sluggard: Or save your voice and just say, "Listen to the rain" (*tapping on her chair*).

Leader: Both methods are splendid, but they lead us into a new phase of story-telling — mimicry. Let's finish our illustrations of gesture first. Can you think of any other nature happenings that could be made clear by gesture?

Ready-to-Try: Looking up when you mention the stars.

Leader: Illustrate.

Ready-to-Try (*rolling her eyes in an artificial fashion, repeats "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star"*).

Cynic: I call that "speaking a piece."

Leader: It was. Were you thinking of the wonder of the far-away star?

Ready-to-Try: No; I was thinking about my eyes.

Leader: Which goes to show that we've got to think about the story rather than our gestures.

Ready-to-Try: I'm literal, and it's hard to imagine stars indoors. But there's the wind howling outside. One day the wind blew, and all the little leaves trembled, *so* (*gesturing*), and the branches shook, *so* (*gesturing*), and the trees bent their heads, *so* (*bending her head*).

Quick-as-a-Flash: I can imagine moving my arms to represent birds flying.

Leader: Then do. Make me see your birds.

Quick-as-a-Flash: Once there were some bluebirds, and the call came for them to go south. So they spread out their wings (*representing them by her arms*) and they flew and flew and flew.

Leader: Good! I saw them. Can you make them hop about so I shall see them?

Quick-as-a-Flash: Not in a story. That would be absurd.

Diffidence: Don't you call that pantomime? And isn't there a place for that?

Leader: An important place in teaching little children. I told you in the last session that you were teaching yourselves. I am illustrating a modern educational principle — in following your lead, instead of mapping out an ironclad course for you.

Go home and think over our illustrations of gesture in story-telling, and come next time prepared with others. And — to go back to our beginning — in describing the giant, what four methods did you use?

Chorus: Comparison and gesture and action and illustration.

Leader: In our next lesson we will think about action — the acts that explain our story characters. And we may take up mimicry as an aid to effective story-telling.

III

ACTION

Leader: Tell me again, what was one method we used in describing a giant?

Ready-to-Try: Comparison.

Leader: Make me realize the height of a tree by that method.

Ready-to-Try: The tree was as tall as the house. The black cat that had climbed to the top could see the white cat sitting on the roof.

Quick-as-a-Flash: You'd forget all about the tree when those cats were mentioned. If you were going to hold my attention, you'd need a cat fight.

Leader: Which leads at once to the story method you used, when you described the giant by saying that he was so tall that when he lay down he had to put his feet out of the window.

Cynic: Yes, action.

Leader: Once upon a time the sun shone on a meadow full of daisies. The trees cast flickering shadows on the flowers. The wind stirred the branches of the trees. Up in the sky floated white clouds. Tell me, would a child be interested?

Cynic: Not one bit.

Leader: But isn't a field full of daisies beloved by all children?

Diffidence: Yes; but there were no children in the story.

Sluggard: You might begin, "Once a child saw a daisy field," and then tell about the sky and the wind and the trees.

Quick-as-a-Flash: Oh, no, no, *no!* Don't you see? The child must be the main thing. This way: Once there was a little girl who just *wished* she had a big bunch of daisies. She wanted daisies because they looked to her like children in white bonnets. She went into the front yard; there weren't any daisies there. She went into the back yard; there weren't any daisies there. She went across the road and under the fence, and — what do you suppose? — there were daisies and daisies and daisies and daisies! She picked till her hands were full. She had the big bunch she wanted.

Chorus: Good!
Splendid!
We could see her!

Leader: There was action in your story, surely.

Ready-to-Try: And repetition.

Cynic: And I was pleased to see the poetic-descriptive-nature part left out. What do children care about clouds and tree shadows and blue sky?

Sluggard: They might. When the little girl had picked the big bunch of daisies she was very tired

and very sleepy. But it was too hot to lie down in the sun, so she lay down in the shade of a tree.

Leader: You started well, but you slumped. I didn't feel greatly concerned because that little girl could not lie down in the sun, nor did I rejoice when she found a shady spot. Make me.

Sluggard (waking up): But it was *terribly* hot. Her head was hot. Her face was red. She was tired, too. She looked all about. Everywhere the sun shone. But, no! not everywhere. There was one big tree in the daisy field. Underneath, it was cool and shady. The little girl sat in the shade. She rested her hot head against the tree. The wind fanned her. Soon she was fast asleep.

Leader: And I'm relieved. You see the sun and the wind and shade all came into the story very well, as part of the plot.

Cynic: Do you call *that* a plot?

Leader: Certainly. You have a heroine on a quest, disappointment followed by the fulfilment of her heart's desire, and the tragedy of a little tired girl in the hot sunshine succeeded by the happy outcome of her rest in the shade. What more can you want?

Cynic: In these days of movies —

Sluggard: A lazy person and a child will welcome a story that is restful and that does not get you keyed up.

Diffidence: My aunt says that she loved the Jacob Abbott stories, when she was a child, because they

told in great detail little familiar happenings. She said he took two pages of fine print to describe how a child put on her winter wraps and ate a bowl of bread and milk on the porch.

Ready-to-Try: I know how surprised I was at the intense interest my beginners took in the story of Elisha's room on the roof. They just loved to have me tell over and over the things in it — the seat and the bed and the table and the lamp.

Leader: This matter of detail we'll go into further by and by. It is true that little children like best little tales of familiar happenings. You notice I say *happenings.* What I told was not a story at all — simply a description. In order to keep children's attention there must be —

Quick-as-a-Flash: Something doing!

Leader: Exactly — action. Tell me any popular nursery tale.

Ready-to-Try (*after telling* "*The Three Bears*"): There's not a dull moment in it, nor an unnecessary word.

Cynic: "The Three Pigs" has what even I would call a plot.

Leader: Now I want you to practice making action dramatic, or, in other words, making your story-characters really act. We will not attempt entire stories, but incidents. I will give a colorless sentence for you to infuse with life: Harry's hoop frightened a cat so that it ran up a tree.

Ready-to-Try: Harry's great big round hoop

went so fast it hit a yellow and white cat with a long tail, and the cat ran up a tall green maple tree.

Cynic: I should call that *adjectivitis.*

Diffidence: Aren't short, crisp sentences more dramatic?

Leader: Such as — ?

Diffidence: Harry rolled his hoop. It went fast. It hit a cat. The cat ran up a tree.

Cynic: That's not drama. That's old-fashioned primer.

Quick-as-a-Flash: Harry's hoop went round slowly, then faster and faster, each time Harry struck it. Harry had to run to keep up. Down the street went Harry and the hoop, round the corner, through the gate, and *bump!* right into the yellow cat. The hoop fell flat. Harry stopped short. And the cat, where was she? Up in the top of a tree, holding on tight, and looking down at the flat hoop and the scared boy. *S-s-s-s-s-s* she spit, and it sounded like, "Don't you dare hit me again!"

Chorus: Give us another to try.

Leader: One of you may have a suggestion.

Sluggard: I want points on my next Sunday's story — David threw a stone and killed the giant.

Cynic: That has enough in it to appeal to me. I'll do it for boys — quite big ones. David came down from the hillside where Saul's soldiers were camping — David, in his shepherd's clothes, with only a stick for a weapon. From the hill opposite strode a giant, covered with heavy armor and bran-

dishing a spear. There was a stir among the armies on both sides, as their champions drew near to fight. But see! David had reached a brook. He leaned down. Was it to drink? No; he was picking up stones from the brook and dropping them into his bag. He heard the clank of the giant's armor. He saw the sun flash on his cruel spear. From his bag David drew his sling. In it he fastened a stone. Coolly he aimed it at the temple of the giant. The stone flew through the air. It reached its mark. On the ground lay the huge Goliath, and the cries of victory from the hillside rang in David's ears.

Leader: We, too, will applaud. It seems cold-blooded to analyze such an impassioned account, but did you notice how at the climax of action her sentences grew crisper and shorter, and how this gave the dramatic effect? This was not in the least like an old-style first reading lesson, was it? I think you all get the idea of action. It is fundamental in story-telling. Strip your story of unnecessary description, and make your actions vivid.

There's another point to be considered. Take for example the story of David, as it has been told. You have got David to the brook picking up stones, while his enemy strides forth from among his soldiers. Then suppose you take advantage of David's occupation to dwell upon his brothers' thoughts. You may say: "In the meantime David's brothers were talking among themselves about the presumption he was showing in electing to go out as champion.

'What has he done to warrant this?' they say. 'To be sure he has killed many a wild beast, but what does he know of fighting with a giant?'"

Does this add to the tale?

Quick-as-a-Flash: Oh, no! Please let David get his stones and go on, or the giant will strike him unawares.

Cynic: That's just the point in a story — to keep your principal character moving. I read in Marie Shedlock's book of a Red Ridinghood who stopped to sing a song, and a small boy listening cried out, "Oh, don't stop to sing! Why don't you *get along?*"

Leader: Well, take Harry and his hoop, which has just struck the cat, and continue like this: "At the same moment came a scream from the house. There was the baby hanging half out of the window. Just in time his nurse saw him, shrieked, and pulled him in. Harry's hoop lay flat, etc."

Cynic: Oh, *don't!* Nobody would have an anti-climax like that. Charles Reade has a murder on one page and a fire on the next, and you get so you take tragedy for commonplace.

Diffidence: But there's "something doing."

Cynic: Too much. I can't thrill over a cat up a tree, when a baby has just been rescued.

Leader: That's the idea. Prune out all but the incidents closely related to the main plot. And now for our next class, please bring in stories full of action, and each be prepared to tell a whole story

of this sort or an incident in a story. We haven't yet touched on the fourth method of illustration, or on mimicry or on repetition. The remainder of the time you may give further illustrations of gesture.

IV

STORIES FULL OF ACTION
ILLUSTRATION AND MIMICRY

Leader: First tell me your stories which are full of action.

(The stories told are "Raggylug," as adapted in Bryant's *How to Tell Stories to Children;* "The Little Half Chick," in Bryant's *Stories to Tell to Children;* and "The Apple Dumpling," in Lindsay's *The Story-Teller.* Two of the class give incidents instead of entire stories.)

Leader: At the risk of appearing tedious, I want to hark back to that first description of a giant, and ask you what method you used to describe him besides comparison, gesture and action, all of which we have discussed.

Ready-to-Try: Illustration.

Leader: Before we forget about this method, I want you to consider it. Would you often resort to it?

Cynic (with emphasis): Never!

Leader: Why not?

Cynic: Because I can't draw.

Leader: Does illustration necessarily mean drawing?

Sluggard: Pictures or objects would make much easier illustration.

Diffidence: I suppose it's all right, but I can't imagine interrupting a story to show a picture or to hold up an object. Didn't we say that these would better be shown before the story was told, to clear up unknown words in it?

Quick-as-a-Flash: I can imagine telling a certain type of story with objects; for instance, the story of an apple. You'd have the objects in your lap, covered with a handkerchief, and bring out one at a time and then hide it again — like this: Once upon a time there were two little brown seeds, and a farmer dropped them into the ground, so — (*you'd lift them high and drop them*). By and by up from the seeds came some little green leaves like these (*you'd show them*). The farmer was glad, for he knew what that meant. By and by there was a stalk and then more leaves like this (*you'd show them*). The farmer was glad, for he knew what that meant. By and by the stalk had become a tree, like this (*you would show a picture*). The farmer was glad, for he knew what that meant. By and by there were pink and white flowers on the apple-tree like these (*you'd show apple blossoms or a colored picture*). The farmer was glad, for he knew what that meant. By and by the apple blossoms fell off, and little green apples were left (*you'd show green apples or draw them*). The farmer was glad, for he knew what that meant. By and by the little green apples had grown

into big red apples. The farmer picked one and ate it. He was glad, for that is why he hid the little black seeds in the ground (*you'd show a ripe apple*).

Leader: That's a very good sample of the type of story that bears illustration. This might also by done by rapid blackboard sketches.

Cynic: And far better, for that apple would be demoralizing. All the children would want to eat it.

Quick-as-a-Flash: And a very good climax it would make. I heard of a teacher who followed up a lesson on God's gift of rain by giving all the class a drink of water, and I consider that a most effective ending.

Leader: If you were telling the story of Jesus in the storm, would you pin a paper boat on a pincushion blackboard, or paper models of a crook and staff, as you told of the Good Shepherd, or a fish and loaves as you told about feeding the five thousand?

Cynic: Poor taste.

Diffidence: I saw that done once, and the children's eyes were riveted on the board; and afterward, when they were supposed to be listening to the rest of the story, they were still looking at the little paper objects. I was there the next Sunday, and they didn't remember the story at all but kept begging for the little paper boats.

Leader: It's a pretty good rule to show any explanatory object before the story, and any illustration after it, except in a tale like the growth of the apple.

Ready-to-Try: I've seen a teacher make marks for every person she brought into the story. The children were just as *still.*

Cynic: And kept their eyes on the blackboard and not on the teacher's face. For my part, I'm glad I *can't* draw, for there will be no temptation to spoil my story by that, at any rate. In spite of all you have said, I know that I, personally, should make no use of objects and little of gesture.

Leader: How would you make a cat vivid?

Cynic: Just as a baby does. I'd call it a "meow."

Leader: Good! I thought we'd come naturally to mimicry. Tell other things little children name by mimicry.

Chorus: A dog is a "bow-wow."
A duck is a "quack-quack."
A watch is a "tick-tick."
A bell is a "ding-dong."
An engine is a "choo-choo."

Leader: How shall we utilize their love of mimicry in story-telling?

Ready-to-Try: When we speak of an animal, mimic its cry.

Cynic: Not for big boys and girls.

Ready-to-Try: I meant for little ones. I think they'd feel lots sorrier for a lost sheep that cried *ba-a-a, ba-a-a.* You couldn't make a herd of cows real unless they mooed. And a dog must bark and a cat meow to seem alive.

Leader: I want to show how fearsome a creature a bear is to a lamb. Will this do it? The bear was big and black, with heavy paws to strike with, and big white teeth to bite with.

Sluggard: *G-r-r-r-r-r* would be shorter and more effective.

Leader: Which is more telling — The bees hummed, or, *hummmmmmm* sounded the bees?

Quick-as-a-Flash: The last. We needn't be confined to the animal world, either. The wind blew, *oo-oo-oo-oo.* The rain fell, *pit-ter, pat-ter, pit-ter, pat-ter.*

Diffidence: I know another class of sounds one might imitate. There were horses' hoofs coming, *pound, pound, pound.* There was a sound at the door — *rap, tap! Bang* went the gun. *Crack* sounded the whip. *Ding, dong,* rang the bell.

Cynic: You who are so fond of gesture ought to see the possibilities of mimicry of action. I suppose you will bow your heads with your character, and toss your mane, if you tell about a horse, and talk falsetto for a child and bass for a man. I'm no elocutionist and I never want to be.

Diffidence: It makes one conspicuous. I might as well give up story-telling, if I've got to.

Leader: Story-telling is not elocution. It never must be. Its simplicity is its charm. You don't need to mimic the speaker's tones. Too much imitated action will make you absurd.

Now, next week will each one of you come prepared to tell a story, or a part of a story, that illustrates the method of mimicry — and was there anything left over to use as a beginning for the next class?

Ready-to-Try: Repetition.

V

STORIES ILLUSTRATING MIMICRY REPETITION

Leader: We will listen first to your stories or incidents illustrating mimicry.

(The stories told are "Harry's Good-bye," from *Beginners' Stories 94*,[1] "Santa Claus," from Lindsay's *The Story Garden*, and "Why Tiny Owl Said 'Whoo,'" from *Tiny Hare and His Friends*, by Sykes. The other members of the class give simple incidents.)

Leader: There is another method very noticeable in all these stories. After every story, certain phrases that occurred again and again were ringing in my head. In the first story it was, "But what he really and truly did say was — " and "Harry understood." In the second it was "*Oo-oo*, sing the winds, *tink-tinkle* ring the bells, and *trit-trot* go the little deer when Santa Claus rides over the world." In the third it was "She made each wing wide, *wide*, WIDE, and her eyes big, *big*, BIG, and away she flew in the dark."

Sluggard: Repetition. It struck me as unnecessary and rather tiresome.

[1] From *Church School Closely Graded Courses*. Published by the Pilgrim Press.

Cynic: A trick to hold attention.

Diffidence: Excuse me, but can anything be called a trick that makes a story artistic?

Ready-to-Try: And rhythmic?

Quick-as-a-Flash: Yes; that's the point. Those repeated phrases are like a refrain, and everybody adores a refrain. Did you ever notice at a concert, when a *motif* occurs often, how the audience settles back with a satisfied air, as if to say, "There! I recognize that. Now I am listening understandingly." It's not a trick at all, but art of the highest order to employ repetition in story-telling.

Leader: Particularly with —

Quick-as-a-Flash: Little children, I suppose you want me to say, but my answer is with everybody. I admit I look for a repeated phrase and revel in it. If that's little-childish, I'm sure the grown-up world is full of little children.

Leader: Would this oft-repeated phrase help the children to tell the story themselves?

Ready-to-Try: Probably they'd memorize it better.

Diffidence: You wouldn't have children memorize a story, would you?

Leader: Not consciously; but these little catchy, repeated phrases they usually can and do repeat word for word.

Diffidence: I once heard some beginners helping tell the story, "The Rain a Helper," and they all

came in like a chorus at the phrase, "And still the water-drops lay quietly in the pond."

Leader: Your comments always show you to be an observer of children. Did these children repeat the phrase as though they had been drilled on it?

Diffidence: Oh, no! rather as if they were telling their part of the story. One little fellow's voice sounded so reproachful of those laggard water-drops! They were fairly living in the story.

Leader: Is it possible to overdo repetition?

Cynic: It assuredly is.

Leader: Illustrate.

Cynic (sarcastically): A little girl went out to walk. She wore a red dress; her curls were long; her eyes were bright. She came to a wood. She wore a red dress; her curls were long; her eyes were bright. She went through the wood to the bridge on the other side. She wore a red dress; her curls were long; her eyes were bright.

Class: Enough!
Absurd!
You'd never go so far as that!

Leader: However, that is a good example of carrying a good method to a ridiculous extent. What would prevent you from erring so radically?

Quick-as-a-Flash: A sense of humor and good taste.

Diffidence: I have a feeling that this sort of repetition would defeat its own end. Even little children would be bored.

Cynic: And would detest that red dress, the long curls and bright eyes.

Leader: Now I want an illustration of the effective use of repetition.

Ready-to-Try: Ruth went out to the barnyard to feed the hens. She threw them corn, and they ate every bit. But the hens did not say Thank you. All they said was *cluck, cluck, cluck.* Ruth went to the stall to feed the cow. She gave her hay, and the cow ate every bit. But the cow did not say Thank you. All she said was *moo, moo.* Ruth went to the back porch to feed the cat. She filled the saucer full of milk, and the cat lapped up every drop. But the cat did not say Thank you. All she said was *meow, meow.* Then Ruth's mother called, "Ruth, come here and have some cookies." She gave her three round cookies on a plate, and Ruth ate every one. And Ruth said, "Thank you."

Leader: A nice little story for very little children. In this case the repetition seemed natural, and not lugged in. It made the story easily understandable. Now illustrate with an incident not quite so simple.

Quick-as-a-Flash: I'll use repetition in describing the little hero of Haarlem, who had put his finger in the hole in the dyke.

No water could come through now. He listened. It was very still. He called. Nobody answered. His finger was not comfortable, held in the hole. It began to ache. The ache went up his arm. Again

he listened. It was very still. He called. Nobody answered. He sat on a stone to ease his aching arm. Then he stood up again, but he never thought of taking his finger out of the hole. Again he listened. It was very still. He called. Nobody answered. It began to grow dark. Night came. He thought of his bed at home. He thought of his father and mother. His arms were numb now. Again and again he listened. It was very quiet. He called. Nobody answered. Very early in the morning he thought he heard footsteps. He was too weak to call loudly, but he groaned. And a minister who had been out all night with a sick man heard the groan, found the brave little boy, and brought help.

I won't bother about the end.

Leader: There's another good use of repetition, not so much of phrases as of words. Could you give the sense of distance by this method?

Ready-to-Try: He walked on and on and on and on.

Cynic: His footsteps sounded faint and far away, step, step, step, and then they were nearer and louder, and nearer and louder, and nearer and louder, step, step, *step, step,* STEP, STEP.

Leader: She made use not only of repetition but of — what?

Ready-to-Try: Emphasis.

Leader: Now I want you to use repetition simply to mark time. What I mean is this. Little children want action in stories, to be sure, but they need time

to take in events. It is as if they sat by a window, watching the story characters pass by. We need to beware of letting them pass too rapidly. Who will try?

Sluggard: That is something right in my line. Once a boy started out to buy his mother some eggs. He walked and walked and walked, till he came to the store.

Diffidence: Or couldn't you follow him along, like this? He went up a hill and down a hill, and turned a corner. Then he went up a hill and down a hill, and turned another corner, and another, and another, till there he was at the market.

Quick-as-a-Flash: Or you could repeat his motions like this: He walked on, and as he walked, he swung his basket to and fro, to and fro. It was an empty basket now. On and on he walked, and still he swung his empty basket, to and fro, to and fro.

Cynic: Or you might name the buildings he passed, and so note his progress. He went on and on, past the schoolhouse, past the church, past the red brick house, past the empty field, past the park, past the candy store — and next was the market.

Leader: Can you think of any other way of using repetition?

Ready-to-Try: Up and up and up and up, would almost count the stairs.

Diffidence: He rolled over and over and over. That's in the same class.

Cynic: She whirled round and round and round. Now aren't you dizzy?

Quick-as-a-Flash: Then if you should use any little rhyme in your story, the children would want to hear that more than once.

Leader: Which leads me to an entirely new topic — the use of rhymes. And this we will save for our next class. Come prepared with the names of some stories that contain rhymes, and notice the use of repetition in popular children's stories.

VI

REPETITION — RHYMES AND EMPHASIS

Leader: What stories have you found in which repetition is used?

Class: "The Three Bears."
"The Three Pigs."
"The Old Woman and Her Pig."
"The Little Half Chick."
"The Gingerbread Boy."

Leader: Are you all convinced of its importance?

Cynic: I'm becoming a convert to all sorts of things I thought I disapproved of.

Sluggard: And I sat up late hunting for stories with rhymes in them.

Leader: What did you find?

Sluggard: A book of Maud Lindsay's, called *Mother Stories*, that's all sprinkled through with rhymes!

Leader: Did they add to the charm?

Sluggard: *Very* much — only, what a task to learn that style of story! For you'd have to learn the rhymes by heart, wouldn't you?

Leader: Yes; you would. But didn't they almost teach themselves, and wasn't there much repetition in them?

Sluggard: Yes; in one only the first line varied:

"White swan, white swan, swimming so gay!
Carry a message for me today!
My love to my mother, wherever she be;
I know she is always thinking of me."

Then it was:

"Wise wind, wise wind, blowing so gay!"

And then:

"Carpenter, carpenter, on your way."

Leader: I don't fear for your power of learning them. Who else has found rhymes in stories?

Ready-to-Try: All of Maud's Lindsay's books have a great many. Some are as simple as this:

"Cock, cock-a-doo,
I'm calling you.
Wake up, wake up,
Cock, cock-a-doo."

Quick-as-a-Flash: I noticed one interesting difference in the use of rhymes. Oftenest they are used in the remarks of people or animals or inanimate things. But occasionally they come in as part of the story.

Leader: For instance —

Quick-as-a-Flash: In a story called "The Roll of Bread" in *A Story Garden*, Miss Lindsay tells about the mother bringing a roll to her little boy, and then changes to rhyme and says:

"The baker had flour so fine and so white;
Shakity shake, he sifted it light,
To make a roll of nice fresh bread
That mother gave to little boy Ted."

Cynic: That could be overdone.

Leader: I agree; but occasionally it is very effective. Who has found other stories with rhymes?

Ready-to-Try: "The House in the Wood," by Grimm. That has a couplet repeated many times:

"Little chicks and spotted cow,
Shall we keep her here, or no?"

Diffidence: I heard one in the beginners' class, called "The Wind a Helper."

Leader: Perhaps we could improve some old stories by the addition of rhymes; for instance, David and Goliath. When David was approaching the giant he might say —

Quick-as-a-Flash: Oh, no! That story is not for little children and what Junior wants a rhyme for a boy who is about to fight a giant? At such a crisis we want short, sharp sentences.

Leader: I believe one of you came prepared to tell a story with rhymes. Let's listen to that now.

* * *

Leader: In the last class we stumbled upon the subject of emphasis, when one of you gave us a sense of approaching footsteps, not only by repeating the words, *step, step, step,* but by indicating their loudness with her voice. Shall you often do that?

Cynic: Unconsciously. But if you plan for it, you become a lady reciter and not a story-teller.

Leader: Think of a common nursery tale in which it is most natural to change your voice.

Ready-to-Try: "The Three Bears." You naturally are gruff when the big bear speaks and squeaky-voiced when the little bit of a bear speaks. No child would listen a minute if you weren't. That's not elocution — it's nature.

Quick-as-a-Flash: So is "The frog *hopped*, and *hopped* and *hopped*." Without realizing it, you fairly make your voice hop. And if you tell of a baby going to sleep you can't shout out the fact. Or if your story is about some fearsome thing, you can't help having a half-scared tone.

Cynic: Let's stop right here or we shall be planning to use certain tones at certain times and become intolerable.

Quick-as-a-Flash: Nonsense! We shan't if we are sympathetic and have children for an audience. They will not permit artificiality. I heard an affected woman start to tell a story in a high-pitched, patronizing voice, and a little fellow in the front row laughed outright in high glee. It was not a humorous tale, and she was so angry she continued her story in a most matter-of-fact fashion. No; if we've got sympathy and interest in our story, we'll find it as natural to vary our tones occasionally as to gesture.

Diffidence: This discussion is doing me good. I'm bashful and hate above all things to be conspicuous, and that inclines me to be a tame, monotonous story-teller. You make me want to plunge right in and

just make children see what I see, and forget all about my appearance.

Leader: Bravo! You are getting into the story-telling spirit. Be willing to crow like a cock, or to be a gruff father-bear or to imitate the wind or the sea, if thus you can make your children live in the story. That's your task, if your children are small.

I told you away back in the beginning of these classes that I should let you teach yourselves. You have done so, for this is the first class that has ended without a subject for the next one suggested by you. So I shall have the unusual pleasure of choosing that subject, which I will keep as a surprise.

Your part will be this — to come prepared to tell a story that particularly appeals to you. You need not tell why or even know why. Just choose one you frankly like and tell it to us.

VII

STORIES THAT APPEAL — CONTRAST

Leader: You are to tell me today stories that appeal to you, and I expect to have a beautiful time, for a story that appeals to you is pretty certain to appeal to your hearers.

Diffidence (*after telling "The Story of Epaminondas," from Bryant's* Stories to Tell to Children): There! you did laugh, and it did seem funny to you, didn't it? I told it once to some children, and not a single one so much as smiled. The story seemed foolish to me, too. Then I read it over, and suddenly it struck me as irresistibly funny, and all by myself I chuckled. I've never told it again till today. I'm so glad you think it's funny.

Cynic: It's because you did, I think. We've all had the experience of repeating a supposedly humorous anecdote, which did not appeal to us, and experiencing the response of forced smiles.

Leader: The story itself is one of the rare humorous stories, the type of humor that particularly appeals to children — ridiculous situations. Miss Bryant wrote, "When you make a story your own and tell it, the listener gets the story plus your appreciation of it." It is more difficult to make people appre-

ciate humor than pathos — easier to draw tears than laughter. I heard a girl who "recited" say, "I can only read sad things." She didn't realize that she was taking the line of least resistance. There is a capital test of one's power to make others feel in this same book of Sara Cone Bryant's. It is called "The Dagda's Harp," and is about a harp which made people laugh and cry and sleep. Now, most of us can make any one feel the sad music and the sleepy music, but it takes a person blessed with a real sense of humor to make one chuckle, when the music of laughter is played.

Diffidence: I'll try it sometimes. Isn't there a dearth of funny stories for children?

Leader: Bring me a list for the next class, and you'll be blessing childhood-that-wants-to-laugh. But even simple, genuine gladness is a feeling many a story-teller cannot arouse. Try this. Who can tell me that the sun shines so that I shall rejoice?

Quick-as-a-Flash: It rained and rained and rained. How it *did* rain! Harold watched it from the window. Close beside him was his new tricycle. It had come only yesterday, and he couldn't ride it with the rain pelting down. He'd told his mother he would take an umbrella, but she said a boy could never learn to ride a tricycle with an umbrella over his head. If the sun only *would* shine! He looked down at the carpet. What was that? *Sunshine!* He looked up at the sky. *There was a blue patch!* By the time he had got on his coat and cap the rain

had stopped, and as he rode up the street on his shiny new tricycle, the sun was making rainbows of every drop of water on every leaf and blade of grass. It's just lovely to ride past rainbows, especially on a brand-new, shiny tricycle.

Class: Good!

Cynic: Only you had to make us sad first, in order to make us correspondingly glad. That's legitimate, of course, but rather a cheap trick, it sometimes seems to me. Couldn't it be accomplished without?

Leader: Do it.

Cynic: One day it began to rain.

Quick-as-a-Flash: Huh! you're beginning wrong.

Cynic: You just wait. I'm going to do a harder thing than you did. I'm going to make you glad of rain, and without using contrast. Listen! One day it began to rain. Oh! but the flowers were glad to get a drink. And the birds, too. They dipped their little beaks into the bird-bath, as the raindrops splashed down, and tipped their little heads back, and drank and drank, and then sang — *sweet-sweet-trrrr!* A cat heard them but he never once tried to catch them, he was so busy lapping up the puddle by the door. But gladdest of all was Jack, for what do you think? He had a pair of new rubber boots. And then — splash, splash, splash! — he walked through every puddle in the yard, with mother at the window calling out, "There's another big one! Try that, Jack!"

Now, it's fun to be a thirsty flower or a bird or a cat drinking, but I don't believe it's quite so nice as to be a little boy with rubber boots splashing through puddles, whose mother does not say, "Be careful! There's a puddle!" but calls out, "There's another big one! Try that!"

Class: Splendid!

Leader: It's odd how this class is coming out. I had planned to be appealed to by your stories; but instead, the one story that has been told has led us along an interesting by-path, the matter of contrast, just now so skillfully avoided. And yet did she avoid it? Was there no contrast in the mother's attitude in regard to puddles? If she had never said "Don't!" would it have been as delightful to have her say "Do"?

Sluggard: Contrast's an easy way of making things vivid.

Leader: As good a way as comparison?

Sluggard: They are used much together. For instance, you might say, "The man was tall as your father is tall, but he was very thin and your father is fat."

Quick-as-a-Flash: If you're telling the story of David and Goliath you need to bring out the contrast between Goliath's armor and David's lack of armor. You can do that by naming the pieces of the giant's armor and his weapons, and then say: "But David had no helmet to protect his head, and no coat of mail to cover his body, or greaves of brass to cover his legs.

For a spear he carried a shepherd's stick, and by his side, in place of a sword, hung a shepherd's bag."

Cynic: My hands are up! I'm convinced. Contrast has won the day! And now haven't we time for one more story-that-appeals?

Ready-to-Try: I'd like to tell mine, to get it out of my system, so I shall not have to try it on every child I meet for the next two weeks, to keep in training! It's "The Knights of the Silver Shield," by Alden, and I found it in *Why the Chimes Rang.*

Leader (after the warm applause of the class at the conclusion of the tale): We'll discuss it at the next class. Be sure not to forget your list of humorous stories.

VIII

HUMOROUS STORIES — AROUSING FEELING

Leader: Now for the funny stories. I'll write them down as you give them, title, author and book.

"The Story of Epaminondas and His Auntie," "How Brother Rabbit Fooled the Whale and the Elephant," "The Brahmin, the Jackal and the Tiger," Bryant, *Stories to Tell to Children*

Tales of Uncle Remus, Harris

Just-So Stories, Kipling

"The Great White Bear," Lindsay, *The Story-Teller*

"The Hare and the Hedgehog," "The Farmer and the Hill-Man," *Riverside Third Reader*

"The Old Woman and Her Pig," Bryant, *How to Tell Stories to Children*

"The Town Musicians," Grimm

"Little Black Sambo," Bannerman

Peter Rabbit, Potter

Leader: A pretty good list, to be sure. Now, to go back to "The Knights of the Silver Shield." What type of story should you call that?

Cynic: A story with a thrill in it — a real, sure-enough thrill, not melodrama. I liked it.

Ready-to-Try: All the stories in *Why the Chimes Rang* are of that character. One feels breathless and touched by every one.

Leader: Did she tell the story so as to retain the interest and make the most of the thrill?

Diffidence: She did. At first it was exciting and she was dramatic. And at the climax, when Sir Roland's shield showed the golden star — well, I thrilled. And she knew enough to stop right there.

Leader: We must talk sometime about good places to stop, for an amateur story-teller is much like an amateur bicyclist; when he's once started he can go all right, but he's awkward at dismounting.

The matter of making people feel what you feel is so important that I want to try some tests. This is an uncomfortably hot room. Who can make me feel cool?

Sluggard: *Oo-oo-oo* whistled the wind, *oo-oo-oo-oo!*

Quick-as-a-Flash: She always chooses a short method, I notice. It takes a real mimic to do that. I'll try another way.

It was very hot on the sands where I lay. The water looked like oil. No breeze stirred a single ripple. I could hardly *breathe*. All at once I saw a black spot, far, far out on the water. It grew bigger. The wind had struck the water. A wave rippled up to my feet — another — and another. I felt the air

stirring my hair. It hit me in the face. My hat blew off. It caught my silk blouse and blew it. I shivered. A black cloud hid the sun. My teeth chattered. "After all," I thought, "the sun is my friend." I reached over for the sweater I had gladly dropped and buttoned it up to my chin. I jumped up to pace the beach and get the blood into my limbs.

Class: Enough!
We're cool now!
Don't any of you dare open a window!

Cynic: I perceive that you made good use of contrast.

Leader: Somebody tell me that a little boy is sick, so that I shall feel sorry.

Diffidence: My boy is sick. His face is flushed and he tosses his head on his pillow, to and fro, and to and fro, and to and fro. I speak to him, but he raises dull eyes to mine and does not answer. He eagerly drinks the water I give him, but it does not stop his constant movements. I start a story. He does not hear me. I put my cool hand in his. He throws it off.

Sluggard: *Please* stop.

Diffidence: Why! he isn't much sick, truly.

Sluggard: You made him so. It's something about your voice, I guess.

Leader: No; it's *feeling*.

Cynic: But if he isn't "much sick," as you say, you are exaggerating. That's no fair.

Diffidence: Maybe I was, but to me even a little sickness in a child is pitiable. Any child ought to be well and romping.

Leader: Don't think that the only feelings we can arouse are those of joy and sorrow. Describe a dog so that I'll want to own it.

Ready-to-Try: He was the cutest, whitest, curliest dog you ever saw, and a perfect little beggar. He'd beg the minute a stranger came near. I think it was to show off, for he couldn't really want anything. Up he'd go on his hind legs, with his front paws hanging limp, and his funny nose wiggling, and his eyes saying, "Please!" First you'd laugh and then you'd feel in your pockets for some stray candy, and then you'd pat his head. Down he'd go on all fours and maybe take a nap, but the minute a step was heard, presto! up he'd get and play the beggar. He's our dog.

Leader: And we wish he were ours. Now let's hear another story-that-appeals.

Cynic: You may not like it, but I do. It's a fairy story — "Little Daybreak," in *How to Tell Stories.*

Quick-as-a-Flash: There is feeling in that and charm and, withal, a good lesson. I imagine there's always a good message in a fairy tale — at least, in the good old ones that have lasted.

Leader: Besides mystery and delicacy of feeling. Her treatment accentuated this. Can you imagine telling a fairy tale dramatically, or with elocution-

ary methods, or with much gesture? And the teller of fairy tales must see fairies herself. Why not bring me a list of fairy tales for the next class? And let's go home without dimming our picture of Little Daybreak.

IX

FAIRY TALES — THE MORAL — FAMILIAR WORDS

Leader: Let us begin by giving our list of good fairy tales.

Class List

Cinderella
Sleeping Beauty
Snow-White and Rose-Red
The Elves and the Shoemaker
One Eye, Two Eyes, and Three Eyes
Beauty and the Beast
The King of the Golden River
Little Daylight
The House in the Wood
The Necklace of Truth

Leader: Rather a short list, but a good one. I see you have kept strictly to fairy tales, and left out such stories as "The Three Bears." Now let us have another of the stories that appeal.

Sluggard: I may as well tell mine now. (Tells "The Wee Hare and the Red Fire," from *Tiny Hare and His Friends*, by Sykes.)

Diffidence: What a joy to find a tale simple enough for the tiniest child, yet interesting and dainty!

Quick-as-a-Flash: And with a nice little moral.

Ready-to-Try: And *so* short.

Cynic: No reflection on the story-teller, but couldn't almost anybody tell that type of story acceptably? It needs only to be told simply.

Leader: It is easier to tell than many stories, I admit, but, frankly, I was disappointed. Even in this little tale I wanted to be thrilled in a small way. I happen to know and love that very story and I want to tell it as it appeals to me.

Sluggard (after the story): I confess I just read the story over, and liked it, and told it. I had no idea it could have so much in it.

Ready-to-Try: It was a live Wee Hare in one case and a play live Wee Hare in the other.

Quick-as-a-Flash: I should rather say that in the last case the story-teller *was* Wee Hare. *She* was wilful and adventurous. *She* shivered and felt afraid. *She* repented and resolved to be good.

Sluggard: Of course I can't expect to be the story-teller you are, with your natural gift.

Leader: It takes work too. I could never be Wee Hare without having become very well acquainted with him.

Sluggard: Laziness has always been my besetting sin.

Leader: You spoke of the story as having a moral. Was the moral quite clear?

Ready-to-Try: Perfectly.

Leader: But it was not stated, was it?

Cynic: Wee Hare reaped the result of disobedience, and he said at the end to Mother Hare, "I *want* to be good." I should despise any story-teller who rubbed in the moral by adding, "Now, dear children, doesn't this story make *you* resolved to obey *your* parents?"

Leader: That's what I hoped somebody would say. Miss Shedlock writes, "To me the idea of pointing out the moral of the story has always seemed as futile as tying a flower onto a stalk instead of letting the flower grow out of the stalk, as Nature has intended."

Quick-as-a-Flash: And you all remember Henry van Dyke's prayer,—"Lord, may I never tag a moral to a story or tell a story without a meaning."

Leader: There is one exception — one type of story in which the moral is quaintly stated at the end, and nobody minds.

Class: Fables.

Leader: And, by the way, will you bring me a list of the best fables for the next class? Another quality of the hare story was its simplicity. Isn't that always a good characteristic in an oral story?

Cynic: Ye-es, but it might easily be overdone. I would rather have a story a bit beyond the children in spots than so simple that it is silly. How will they ever learn new words, if we never use any?

Leader: They often guess the meaning of new words from the context, or a new word may be explained in passing.

Diffidence: Wouldn't Wee Hare need to be explained? He's only four letters long, to be sure, and "wee" is three letters, but the small children I know would understand "Little Rabbit" better.

Leader: That takes me back to my own primer days, when we began with words of two letters and progressed regularly, letter by letter. My first sentence was, "Ho, an ox! Ox, on!" and this was difficult, for it meant nothing to me. Now that children don't need to spell first, beginning with familiarly used words is so much more sensible. Carry out this principle in your story-telling and you'll be all right. Name some long words that are better known to children than short ones.

Class: *Unhappy* rather than sad.
Animal rather than beast.
Hens and roosters rather than fowls.
Knows a great deal rather than wise.

Cynic: But you could introduce some such word, by explaining it. And do let's try for good English. It can be simple and yet pure.

Leader: Now we shall have time for the last story-that-appeals.

Quick-as-a-Flash: That means me for the story-teller, and I'm sure you will like my story. (*Tells "Moufflou," by Ouida.*)

Diffidence: It's too lovely to applaud.

Leader: After such a story let's do as we would allow our children to do — just go home.

X

FABLES — AMPLIFYING

Leader: First give me your list of good fables for children under nine.

Class List

The Boy Who Cried "Wolf!"
The Fox and the Grapes
The Fox and the Stork
The Ant and the Grasshopper
The Talkative Tortoise
The Lion and the Mouse
The Ant and the Dove
The Wind and the Sun
The Hare and the Tortoise
The Crow and the Pitcher
The Gourd and the Pine Tree
The Dog and His Shadow
The Hare and the Hound
The Dog in the Manger
The Blind Man and the Lame Man
The Fox in the Well
The Goose That Laid Golden Eggs
Belling the Cat
The Frog and the Ox

Leader: Would you amplify these fables?

Diffidence: I think so, for little children. You could easily do so without spoiling or changing them.

Leader: But isn't brevity in a story desirable?

Quick-as-a-Flash: Yes, but a story must not be so short that you do not have a beginning or an end or a climax. Otherwise your fable is a statement and not a story. Many of the fables seem to me to be mere statements.

Leader: Show me what you mean by amplifying the fable, "Belling the Cat." I will read it as it usually is given, and then the rest of you may copy each other's lists of fables, while you think it out.

"There was a sly Cat in a house, and the Mice were so plagued with her at every turn that they called a council to advise some way by which they might guard against being caught by her.

"'If you will be ruled by me,' said one of the Mice, 'there's nothing like hanging a bell about the Cat's neck, to give warning beforehand when Puss is coming.' They all thought that a capital plan.

"'Well,' said another, 'now we are agreed upon the bell, say, who shall hang it upon the Cat's neck?' But there was no one ready to bell the Cat."

Quick-as-a-Flash: I'm ready now. Once there were some mice who lived in a house where there were crumbs a-plenty, and cheese a-plenty, and where the cook always forgot to put the cover on the pail of flour. There were papers a-plenty to tear up for nests, and there was room a-plenty between the walls for running up and down at night. Oh! it was a

splendid home for mice, if it hadn't been for one thing — one *terrible* thing — with claws and green eyes and whiskers and sharp teeth — a CAT.

At least once a week a mouse ran out of his hole for crumbs, or for cheese, or for flour, and *never came back.* It was only between the walls that the mice could run happily, but mice cannot run happily when they are hungry.

So one day they all came together to see what could be done.

Said one mouse, "It isn't her sharp claws I dread; it's her soft paws."

Said another mouse, "It isn't because her green eyes see me that I fear, but because I can't hear her coming."

Said another mouse, "It isn't her teeth I think about; it's her creeping up behind me so quietly."

Then the wisest mouse of all said, "Do as I tell you. Hang a bell about her neck. Then we shall hear her coming."

"Good!" said all the mice, squeaking together. "Splendid! We'll do it."

"But who will?" asked a very small mouse. "Who will hang the bell on the cat's neck?"

And not a single mouse spoke — not a single, single one.

And so the Cat was never belled.

Chorus: Good!

Cynic: That teaches me that a fable may be made really thrilling. I never supposed it possible.

Leader: It is a capital illustration of amplifying a classic without changing it. Some people make themselves entirely too free with classics, in my opinion, changing their endings or introducing new incidents *ad libitum*. Now, this story simply touched up the facts and made them live: it put in detail.

Quick-as-a-Flash: It gave you a chance to prolong your thrill, so to speak.

Leader: And this matter of length is important. "The Wee Hare and the Red Fire" took barely five minutes to tell. I often tell a three-minute story. Ten minutes I consider my outside limit for little children, and eight is much better. As you perfect yourself in story-telling, it's astonishing how you prune and prune, and get a skeleton plot, and then proceed leisurely to fill in detail. That's the secret — to have a clear, straight-forward, rapidly progressing plot, *with no side issues*, and then add plenty of detail.

Cynic: But we've never discussed "Moufflou."

Leader: Which ought to end my sermon. Yes; you were touched by it, it was plain.

Cynic: And that's what I rather question. Ought we to have been quite so much touched?

Quick-as-a-Flash: Dear me! Was I maudlin?

Cynic: No; you were truly moved by a pathetic little tale of a dog's devotion, and you moved us. I admit that when Moufflou came pattering up the stairs I had a lump in my throat. And you didn't make the sick Lolo too sick. That I noted with ap-

proval. But it *is* a pathetic story, and ought we to tell little children pathetic stories?

Leader: Not morbid stories, surely. You remember those dreadful, unwholesome Elsie Dinsmore stories, don't you? But it seems to me "Moufflou" has only enough of the pathetic to be wholesome, and it ends well. As a rule I believe in giving little children the stories that end well.

Sluggard: She made Moufflou go through all his tricks every time she told that he did tricks. It struck me that was unnecessary.

Diffidence: It struck me as delightful. If she had simply said he did his tricks, she'd have given us no time to enjoy all over again his begging and dancing and soldiering and turning himself into a wheelbarrow. Children would enjoy it. It gives them time.

Leader: This whole matter of repetition of detail deserves an hour by itself. I propose that you come to the next class prepared to tell stories or bits of stories, using much detail.

XI

DETAILS

Leader: Today we are to enter into details in our story-telling.

Cynic: In other words, gossip. It seems to me that too much detail makes a story degenerate into mere tittle-tattle. Personally, I do not care to put my heroine under a magnifying glass. I'm not a cubist, but I am a lover of Whistler, and "The Girl in Red" is enough for me, not the girl with black eyes set rather close together, an aquiline nose, regular teeth, brown hair done high and with a slight tendency to curl, a complexion —"

Class: Enough!

You have a novel in mind: we are thinking of children's stories.

Cynic: But I argue that, even in the simplest tale for children, we should use art, and so prepare him for real literature. I insist that there is no art in a mass of silly little details, and that the heroine of a child's story would better be "a little girl" than Jennie Dusenberry, of Providence, R.I., whose father, Mr. John Dusenberry, a lawyer, takes her on a ride in his seven-passenger Packard. I admit this is an exaggeration but you know the type of

story I refer to. I have found a lot of them, in looking up the detail stunt. I'm so tired of Sammie Smith, who paid ten cents for a red cart with four wheels, and Julia Jones, whose costume is described in such detail that you feel she's stepped out of a fashion sheet, and the tiresome round of daily activities of Bessie Brown, who makes one wonder why anybody so uninteresting must have a biography. I never did like realistic stories. Even Howells palls on me. And I believe this is what detail means. I pine for the good old fairy tales, where the princess is all the more fascinating for being a bit hazy, and we are not initiated into a detailed account of the routine in Cinderella's day.

Chorus: Hear, hear!
The riot act!
Maybe you're right.

Quick-as-a-Flash: You make a convincing case against a certain dreary realism which we have all found in children's stories, yet I still see high art in much detail. Take the story of little Cosette from *Les Miserables*, for instance. You might state that on Christmas Eve she saw a doll in the toy-shop window and gazed at it longingly. Now, I believe the point is to make one's hearer (or reader) long with Cosette, and that statement doesn't do it. Let us say, then, that she saw a *large* doll in the window, and the mere fact of great size does not produce the longing that we need. But what does Victor Hugo do? Tells us of the gold wheat about the doll's head, the real

hair, the pink satin gown, and we thrill with Cosette, as she breathes, "She is a lady, and the shop is her palace!" It was the gold wheat and the real hair and the pink satin gown that did it!

Ready-to-Try: I'm afraid I'm a mere weather-vane, for I find myself agreeing with each of you in turn. Suppose I tell the story I had prepared as an illustration for this subject, and let you two base your arguments on this concrete case. (*Tells "The Gingerbread Man," as given in* Stories to Tell to Children, *by Bryant.*)

Quick-as-a-Flash: A splendid argument for detail.

Cynic: A clear illustration of the absence of petty detail.

Class (*laughing*): Which has it?

Leader: Where do you find the detail?

Quick-as-a-Flash: In the minute description of the hero of the tale, down to his rose-colored mouth and currant eyes; in the detailed repetition of those who chased him — the little old woman, the little old man, the cow, the barn full of threshers, and the field full of mowers; and also in the prolonged climax, when the hero jumps from the fox's tail to his shoulder, from there to his nose, and has to be one-quarter and one-half and three-quarters gone, before he finally perishes. Without detail this story would be — A gingerbread man jumped out of an old woman's oven, ran away from various pursuers, and was finally eaten by a fox.

Leader: And you find an absence of detail — where?

Cynic: In no names being given to the little old folks, no color to the cow, no account of the labors of the threshers and mowers, or any detail of the villain except his summary disposal of the victim. There's not a superfluous word in the tale; it's all action, and breathless, for no one in it stands still to be described. And though I grant we are made to see the Gingerbread Man in detail, it's before he starts running; once on the go, we are not treated to his various changes of expression, or to enumerations of his features.

Sluggard: That's the usual outcome of arguments. You are both more firmly intrenched in your former ideas. That's why I never argue.

Diffidence: I think I see the point. One of you spoke of *petty* detail. That's a grave fault and spoils any story, but detail of the right sort makes a tale vivid. I think it's detail that brings out the point you're striving to make. For instance, who *cares* what a thresher is or how he dresses, so long as he chases? Who *cares* what was the color of the dress Cosette wore, so long as the coveted doll is vivid? The point is to distribute your detail wisely, isn't it? Be lavish with it to make one thing or person stand out and let the others be more vague; like an artist, you know, who understands that a finicky background takes from his portrait.

Quick-as-a-Flash: Bravo! You're exactly right.

Leader: In a story about many animals, told for little children, where would your detail come?

Diffidence: I should say in naming the animals. You'd never say "animals" to little children, anyway, but horses and elephants and dogs and cats.

Leader: That remark about not saying "animals" makes me wonder if there are any more general terms we use unwisely with the smaller children. Will one of you give me one, and another the antidote?

Quick-as-a-Flash: Food.

Diffidence: Ice cream, bread and milk, and cookies. A person who gave a child food is not regarded as particularly praiseworthy, but the listener's heart warms to one who gave the child a plate of cookies!

Sluggard: Clothes.

Diffidence: A sailor suit and a red necktie.

Cynic: Would I be allowed to dress my fairy princess in cobweb lace, with a moonshine sash?

Diffidence: Oh, yes, *indeed!* The sound of the words is adorably mysterious and yet detailed.

Leader: We'll have time for one or two more story-illustrations of the subject.

("The Red Thread of Courage" is read, as printed in *How to Tell Stories* by Bryant, and then told with detail added, as the author illustrates. "Why the Sea Is Salt," in the same book, is the other story.)

XII

OVER–EXPLANATION

Leader: Have you any further remarks to make on detail in story-telling?

Cynic: It's better not to disturb a truce, and you remember we disputants ended peaceably; only there is one question I do want to bring up, and that is, how highly colored shall we make our stories? Understand me, I do not speak figuratively but literally. Little Cosette's doll appealed largely because her head decoration was gold, and her dress pink. Now that I'm being educated in detail, I want to inquire how much color should be worked in. Would a story in sepia or black and white outline ever be permissible?

Diffidence: My opinion is that stories are much like pictures, and whether they require color to interest children depends upon the subjects. I find the beginners are exactly as fond of an uncolored picture of squirrels eating nuts as they are of the brown colored pictures of squirrels, but when it comes to flowers or birds they will pay no attention to uncolored prints.

Quick-as-a-Flash: I see. Now, in "The Three Bears" nobody cares whether they were black,

brown, or white, and the only color in the whole story is supplied cleverly by the heroine's name, Goldilocks. Yes; and there's the Little Red Hen and Little Red Riding Hood, and Snow White and Rose Red, and Little Black Sambo — quite a list of characters in color, with the rest of the story in black and white. But when it comes to stories of flowers and sky and birds, I can see how we *must* use color. I think of blue sky as one word always — bluesky — and green grass and white clouds and yellow sun almost say themselves. So important is color in the birds that they are named bluebird and blackbird and redbird.

Cynic: Dear me, yes! And we get detailed coloring all right in the warbler, the black-throated green, and blue yellow-backed, for instance. However, I get your point, and I guess we'll have to mix colors with common sense, as we do everything else.

Leader: Suppose we do not go too much into detail over detail, but pass on to a subject that occurred to me as you were talking in the last class, the subject of over-explanation. Some one said it was not necessary to explain the threshers, in the Gingerbread Boy, as long as they chased the hero. I want to read what Marie Shedlock says about this danger of over-explanation:

> My own experience is that the fewer explanations you offer, provided you have been careful with the choice of your material and artistic in the presentation, the more the child will supplement by his own

thinking power what is necessary for the understanding of the story.

Queyrat says: "A child has no need of seizing on the exact meaning of words; on the contrary, a certain lack of precision seems to stimulate his imagination only the more vigorously, since it gives him a broader liberty and firmer independence." [1]

Sluggard: Being lazy from childhood may be the reason why I never used to ask the meaning of words that I didn't understand in stories. I remember thinking of an elf as a sort of humanized bumblebee, and I pity the child I read of recently who described elves as "male fairies"! So much is gathered from the context, anyway.

Cynic: I remember how annoyed I always was to read a story and picture the scenes in imagination, and then to come across an illustrated copy. The houses were always on the wrong side of the street, and the characters too fat or too thin, too tall or too short. I felt as if the story were no longer my own.

Quick-as-a-Flash: That's the idea, the crux of the whole matter. Children ought to be permitted to make the stories *their own*. We are too anxious to present to them *our* stories. I perceive one of this class smiling ironically. You don't need to, for this is an entirely different matter from detail. I will proceed to satirize the over-explanatory tale, which may give you an idea of where one may arrive!

[1] *The Art of the Story-teller*, by Marie Shedlock. Published by D. Appleton & Company. Used by permission.

Once there were three camels (animals unusually tall, with humps, and large feet, and capable of going for a long time without water) and on their backs were Wise-men from the East. Wise-men are men who study the stars and think that they explain a great deal about what is to happen. Now, these Wise-men on their camels came to Jerusalem. I must tell you about Jerusalem.

Class: Don't.

Leader: We talked at the very beginning about the objections to interrupting a story to show pictures, and surely there is as much objection to interpolating explanations. In my opinion they should come either beforehand, or naturally, as a part of the story. Who can describe a camel in this way?

Ready-to-Try: Once a camel traveled over the sands. His great feet made the hot sands crackle, and high, high up, between the humps on his back, perched a man, in an odd little tent. He leaned out and said something to the camel, something the camel seemed to understand; for he stopped short and kneeled, and his master stepped down and spread a rug and got out his lunch. And of course you suppose the camel was thirsty, as he watched the skin bottle that his master tipped up to his lips? Not he, for he had drunk plentifully three days ago.

Leader: Excellent!

Cynic: That's the right idea. Instead of forcing your heroine to seat herself and have her portrait

painted, let her do something that involves some of her features.

Sluggard: What *do* you mean?

Cynic: I'll illustrate. A child ran down the garden path, and above her flew a bluebird, whose coat seemed made from a left-over piece of her gown. But the bluebird gained in the race, for there are no stones in sky paths. In the garden path a very large stone tripped a very small foot, and a rose-bush near by found on its branches, instead of red roses, a mass of red curls. *Oh-h-h* came a wail, and if that child's eyes hadn't been very fast blue, I think the number of tears that fell from them would have washed out every bit of color.

This isn't very high art, but you understand. There's a lot more art in saying, "Jack reached the highest apple without standing on his tiptoes," than in tamely stating, "Jack was very tall."

Leader: We will close by listening to any left-over story illustrating detail, and next week come prepared to talk about effective beginnings and endings.

(The story told is "The Little Fir Tree," from *Stories to Tell to Children*, by Bryant.)

XIII

PREPARATION — BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS

Leader: Today I will tell you a story. My story is about a boy who was very brave when he had something hard to do. It seemed as though he would fail, once, but he finally came out all right. Now I will tell the story.

Cynic: But you already have.

Leader: Oh, no! I only caught your interest by giving the subject of my tale.

Cynic: If it is true that a story should work up to a climax, why, yours can't, for you've told us the climax before you began.

Quick-as-a-Flash: Yet for such as myself, this is a satisfactory beginning. I confess to looking over to the end of a novel, before I can settle down to enjoy it. If I didn't know how a story ended, I should skip all the descriptions and miss all the fine points.

Diffidence: And then there is the accepted theory that children like best familiar tales.

Leader: *Little* children, not older ones. But I should say my introduction would spoil even a little child's story. I gave it as a warning, not as an example. Why not tell your story as well as possible,

rather than precede it with a poorly told tale, in a couple of sentences?

Ready-to-Try: I should say the idea was all right, of some sort of preparation for the story. I notice our church-school lesson writers often employ this method.

Cynic: And mighty far-fetched and unnecessary these preparations often are. Why not just begin, instead of getting ready to prepare to begin? Here's a long dissertation on obedience before a story on obedience is started. Why not sail right in on the story itself?

Leader: It can be done poorly, I admit. We are likely to get pedantic and ride any method to death. But it can also be done delightfully and with telling effect. Playing do errands gives a certain atmosphere for telling a story on obedience that makes it impossible for a child to fail to get its message.

Quick-as-a-Flash: Excuse me for breaking in, but I see a reason for story preparation that is not pedantic but perfectly natural. One might almost say it's just good taste. Don't we all detest the man with a pet story, who simply will tell it, apropos or not? We even prefer the spirit of the diner-out with a gun story, who, as the conversation simply would not turn toward military matters, stamped with his heels, and then remarked to his astonished fellow-guests, " Doesn't that sound like a gun? Speaking of guns — " and was off!

Really, all we are trying to do is to make our story fit into our conversation naturally, and not just to plump it down on our children without warning. We can do it as poorly as the man with a gun story, or we can do it effectively, and, well done, it brings out the point of our story.

Diffidence: Yes, yes; just as a bit of blue at the throat calls attention to the blue of one's eyes.

Sluggard: I hate to throw cold water upon such poetic rapture, but I must suggest that this preparation be short. A person of my temperament might easily get tired out in too circuitous an approach, so that the journey itself would seem uninviting.

Leader: We've talked about the preparation for a tale. Really, what I had in mind more particularly was the beginning of the story itself.

Chorus: Long, long ago.
Once upon a time.
Listen and I will tell you.
When I was a little boy.

Leader: Good, and time-honored, but after these phrases that catch the attention, what? Long, long ago there was a place called Jerusalem. It was situated in Palestine, which is —

Cynic: Let's rule out geographical beginnings. They may do for novels, but not for a told story. And we won't begin historically, either. I detest a story that starts in with a date. It seems too much like a school recitation, and I find myself working

away, trying to fix these numbers in my brain for a possible test.

Ready-to-Try: Well, how about a descriptive beginning — telling just how your heroine looked and what she wore?

Cynic: We tabooed that in our last class. No, we want to arrest the attention without giving away the plot, and make our first statement vivid and vital. That I see, but just how I can't illustrate.

Leader: I'll give you Marie Shedlock's instances of good beginnings:[1]

"There was once a giant ogre, and he lived in a cave by himself."

"There were twenty-five tin soldiers, who were all brothers, for they had been made out of the same old tin spoon."

"There was once an emperor who had a horse shod with gold."

"There was once a merchant who was so rich that he could have paved the whole street with gold, and even then he would have had enough for a small alley."

"There was once a shilling which came first from the mint, springing and shouting, 'Hurrah! Now I am going out into the wide world!'"

"In the High and Far-Off Times, the Elephant, O Best Beloved, had no trunk."

"Not always was the Kangaroo as now we do behold him, but a Different Animal with four short legs."

[1] From *The Art of the Story-teller*, by Marie Shedlock. Published by D. Appleton & Company. Used by permission.

"'Whichever way I turn,' said the weathercock on a high steeple, 'no one is satisfied.'"

"A set of chessmen, left standing on their board, resolved to alter the rules of the game."

"The Pink Parasol had tender whalebone ribs, and a slender stick of cherry-wood."

"There was once a poor little Donkey on Wheels: it had never wagged its tail, or tossed its head, or said 'Hee-haw,' or tasted a tender thistle."

Class: Bravo!
That's the idea!
It makes you wild to hear the whole.

Leader: Now, an immediate problem in Sunday school is to make the beginnings of Bible stories interesting. Try to do that for me.

Ready-to-Try: David was a shepherd boy who killed a giant.

Class: Hold on!
The story is told.
You've spoiled the climax.

Quick-as-a-Flash: David was a shepherd boy. One day his father called him in from tending sheep to go to visit his soldier brothers.

Leader: Better.

Sluggard: A ship plowed the sea. Down under her decks lay a man, fast asleep, a man who was trying to run away from God.

Diffidence: Who was he? I haven't an idea.

Sluggard: Do you want to know?

Diffidence: I'm dying to.

Sluggard: Jonah, of course.

Cynic: With scowling faces some men watched their young brother in his coat of many colors.

Ready-to-Try: Joseph! It's like a guessing game. Now I'm the only one who hasn't tried. I'm going to give an entirely different sort of beginning, thus: Jesus sat in a boat telling stories.

Leader: That is compelling from its very simplicity. Now for some effective endings, and again I'll quote those Miss Shedlock mentions.[2] She says:

> They must impress themselves either in a very dramatic climax to which the whole story has worked up, as in the following:
>
> "Then he goes out to the Wet Wild Woods, or up the Wet Wild Tree, or on the Wet Wild Roofs, waving his Wild Tail, and walking by his Wild Lone."
>
> Or by an anti-climax for effect:
>
> "We have all this straight out of the alderman's newspaper, but it is not to be depended upon!"
>
> Or by evading the point:
>
> "Whoever does not believe this must buy shares in the Tanner's Yard."
>
> Or by some striking general comment:
>
> "He has never caught up with the three days he missed at the beginning of the world, and he has never learned how to behave."

Cynic: It strikes me it would take all the joy out of story-telling to have the end continually in view. Why not just stop when you are through?

[2] *The Art of the Story-teller,* by Marie Shedlock. Published by D. Appleton & Company. Used by permission.

Diffidence: But it makes all the difference in the world when you do stop. Can't you remember the indignation you felt when, after the end of the story, the story-teller proceeded to explain the tale, or, worse, to rub in the moral?

Cynic: Of course, everybody hates that. What I meant was that I could never tell a story spontaneously, if I had to save up some telling sentence for the last one. I'd rather trust to my good taste.

Quick-as-a-Flash: But good taste can't always decide, because, alas, good taste isn't the possession of every story-teller. It seems to me that a good general rule is to end with the climax. For instance, in the story of the Gingerbread Man, the end is obviously the disappearance of the last crumb of the hero, for, with the hero off the stage (or in the fox!) who cares for the future career of the devourer? So with the story of David and Goliath. It is complete when the giant is killed.

Cynic: In other words, the end of the story is the end of somebody's life!

Quick-as-a-Flash: I hope not, necessarily. The end of the story of Jonah is the repentance of the people of Nineveh, and I'd certainly save the gourd incident for another time. The Feeding of the Five Thousand ends with the picture of the people going home, well-fed and wondering. The story of Lot's choice ends with God's promise to Abraham. And Joseph — but the Joseph story is too long for a single one.

Leader: And so will this class be, unless we stop. We will illustrate our subject by closing with no farewell words, except by saying, to whet your interest in the next class, that we will consider then those group stories which you have just mentioned.

XIV

GROUP STORIES

Leader: You remember we began talking about group stories. Somebody mentioned the Joseph stories as an example. Could the entire history of Joseph be told as a single story?

Ready-to-Try: I think so.

Cynic: Not without sacrificing a great deal of fascinating detail. The only advantage I can see is that you'd get a better idea of Joseph than you would by taking each stage of his career, for as a younger brother in the home he always did seem priggish to me. It takes something of an artist to pick out the right number of short stories in a long story, and to decide on the beginnings and endings for each one.

Quick-as-a-Flash: It's a great trick, though, and as I see it, more necessary to stories that are told than to those that are read. I myself think that it's better to tell a story like Joseph in sections, even if you tell it all in one story hour, as you well can to the older children. It is like a book in chapters — that is, if you round out each story well.

Sluggard: I've noticed that children like several stories about one person.

Diffidence: My little children don't care. Their interest seems rather to be in the plot.

Sluggard: I suppose you'd call it the dawning historical sense that causes the craving for group stories with the older children; but I, from my own experience, am inclined to call it laziness. I always find it quite a task to get the characters of a story straightened out. When once I've done it I could read on and on indefinitely. They seem like own folks!

Leader: Take the story of Ruth. Can you make more than one story from that?

Diffidence: For young children, very nicely.

Cynic: For older children, very poorly.

Quick-as-a-Flash: I see one grave danger in this. It would never do to leave children all wrought up, with the hero in a precarious position. I've heard that argument used against continued stories.

Leader: How could this danger be overcome?

Cynic: By making each separate story a unit — a single incident.

Leader: For instance?

Cynic: 1. David's Contests with the Wild Beasts.
2. David and Goliath.
3. David and Jonathan.
4. David and Saul.
5. David and Mephibosheth.

Ready-to-Try: Various King Arthur tales, each complete.

Quick-as-a-Flash: Various incidents in mythology, each complete.

Diffidence: Only let's take care not to split up our stories so fine we shall have nothing left. All tales are not fitted to be group stories. Imagine telling even little children a group about the Little Half Chick, for example, —

1. Little Half Chick's Determination to Leave Home.
2. Little Half Chick's Journey to Madrid.
3. Little Half Chick's Merited Punishment.

Leader: The saving grace of any story method must always be —

Class: Common sense!

Ready-to-Try: Isn't there another great possibility in discovering a tellable story in a long story or book — just one, when none of the remaining material is usable?

Leader: Good! Yes, there are in many a dry waste of written matter gold nuggets to be had for the digging.

Quick-as-a-Flash: Only the digger must be able to distinguish the true metal.

Cynic: I wonder if there aren't some still undiscovered story nuggets hidden in the Bible itself.

Leader: It's possible, although Bible ground has been gone over pretty thoroughly. But we had no real story-telling in the last class, and I want the remaining time to be spent that way. I have asked three of you to come prepared with stories to tell.

Cynic tells "Bre'r Fox and the Little Rabbits."

Class: Capital!
The best Uncle Remus story I ever heard!
And told so well.
You learned it practically by heart?

Cynic: Not consciously, but to get the dialect one almost must, and the characteristic phrases do stick.

Ready-to-Try tells "The Pony Engine."

Class: Children adore that.
I recognize the use of imitation.
And I repetition.
And I liked the ending, simply "I-thought-I-could," by the Pony Engine, with no comment.

Sluggard (after telling "The Fox and the Stork"): You see, I'm true to my nature and chose a short one.

Leader: But I also see that you took much pains in its preparation and lengthened it all that was possible.

Now, will you come to the next class prepared to tell stories in which the characters converse?

XV

DIRECT DISCOURSE

Leader: You were to come prepared to tell stories in which the characters converse. I await your entertainment with all the anticipation I should have in overhearing any talk, for I fear the rôle of eavesdropper always appealed to me. Who is to start?

Sluggard: Behold, I, even I, do offer! But don't deceive yourselves for one moment into the belief that my nature is changed. No, 'tis simply because I'm afraid if I don't come first I'll get left over for a fortnight, and have to work up my tale again. So here goes:

Once there were a little old woman and a little old man, who would have been only nine feet tall together, if one had stood on the other's head; for the little old man was five feet high and the little old woman four. They were dressed all in brown, and had strange little brown faces like nuts, and bright black eyes, and their hands were tiny and crumbled up like paws, and they chattered to each other constantly. They were never apart more than five minutes, but after even so short a time they would hurry to tell each other everything they had heard or seen or done. It was very droll to see them. It was funnier to hear them. They chattered about the weather. They chattered about

their food. They chattered about their neighbors. And all the while they chattered they moved their little paw-like hands. When they put them up to their chins they looked for all the world like squirrels with nuts, which were their own heads!

One day the little old woman told the little old man that she had found a great treasure. He wanted to know what it was. At first she would not tell, but by and by she said she would tell him in riddles. She said the treasure was hidden sweetness, and he guessed honey; but she said no, that this sweetness could move, and honey was still. Then the little old man guessed a sweet lily nodding in the wind, but the little old woman said it was sweet to the taste, not to the smell. The little old man was ready to give up, and the little old woman told him that she saw the hidden sweetness run out of its hiding-place and get caught, and that fire would make it sweeter. But still the little old man could not guess. Then she stirred the fire and hung a small black kettle over it, and told the little old man to come along. She stopped at a big maple tree. In the trunk of the maple tree was a hole. In the hole was a wee wooden trough. Over the trough hung a pail. And out of the tree, down the trough, and into the pail ran the hidden sweetness, *maple sap!* The little old man wondered he hadn't guessed the secret, and the little old woman chattered with glee, and together they carried the pail of maple sap home and poured it into the black kettle, and it boiled and boiled into — *maple syrup!* Then the little old woman asked if the little old man didn't think her secret was a good one, and the little old man said that he did.

Class: A *nice* little story!
And well told.

All except rather a flat ending.

And a big loss in not using direct discourse.

Leader: Yes; that's the only effective way. Indeed, that is why I asked for stories containing conversation. Now, I took the story down in shorthand, without your knowing it, and I will read the conversation as it was given and ask one of you to change it to direct discourse.

Quick-as-a-Flash (*changes the conversational parts as follows*):

One day the little old woman said to the little old man, "I've found a great treasure."

"What is it?" said he.

"I shall not tell you," said she, and shut her lips tight. But by and by she said, "I'll tell you in a riddle. My treasure is hidden sweetness."

"Honey!" guessed the little old man.

"No, for my treasured sweetness can move, and honey is still."

"A sweet lily nodding in the wind."

"No, for my treasure is sweet to the taste, not to the smell."

"I'll give up."

"I saw the hidden sweetness run out of its hiding-place and get caught. Fire will make my treasure sweeter."

"I can't guess it."

Then the little old woman stirred the fire and hung a black kettle over it. "Come along!" she said to the little old man.

* * *

[And the end would be,—]

"Don't you think my secret was a good one?" asked the little old woman.

"I do," said the little old man.

Cynic: It's really wonderful the difference this makes. I had no idea direct discourse would compel one's attention so much more than indirect.

Diffidence: It's the characters speaking in one case, and merely a report of their conversation in the other.

Quick-as-a-Flash: It's the same thing that makes the gossip certain of listeners, when she begins, "he says" and "she says" — the *personal* element.

Leader: Who else has a story to tell, with the conversation in direct discourse?

Cynic (*tells "The Little Red Hen," from Bryant's* Stories to Tell to Children): This would have been flat enough, if I had said "The Goose said she would not," instead of "'Not I,' said the Goose," etc.

Ready-to-Try tells "Chicken Little," from Bailey and Lewis's For the Children's Hour.

Leader: Another good illustration, and well told. Did anybody choose a Bible story?

Diffidence: I did — Jesus Healing a Blind Man.

Leader (*at the close*): You told it very nicely, bringing in all the conversation given in the Bible narration but paraphrasing it.

Quick-as-a-Flash: Mine is Jesus Feeding the Five Thousand, and I think this story loses in force

without the conversation, almost as it is in the Bible.

Leader (*after the story*): Now, how do you feel about conversational stories? Do they have vitality, force?

Sluggard: They seem very desirable to me, for they are interesting even when there is very little plot.

Leader: I think next week we will take up some points I've jotted down as necessary to discuss, and not come prepared with any special stories.

XVI

GAINING ATTENTION — QUESTIONS — PAUSES

Cynic: There was one question I wanted to ask at the last class: Did any of you ever hear, or rather, see a story-teller turn from one side to another, as she represented different characters in her story? I noticed none of this class was guilty, but I saw a young miss " render " a story thus. I assure you, it was a performance, and I longed for the good old days when grandmothers told stories without any training — just with their dear, old, grandmotherly good sense and sympathy.

Diffidence: Because one silly girl tried to be an amateur elocutionist is no argument against a story-telling class such as this.

Cynic: Far be it from me to argue against a class that I entered merely to criticize, and that may count me as a convert to methods in story-telling I never supposed I should countenance. But I could not resist delivering another blow to the affected teller of tales.

Leader: And rightly. I, myself, feel there is even a danger in story-telling classes, that of making people self-conscious.

Class: Not of yours.
You've killed it in me.
You've exalted the story, so that the teller of it feels of no account.

Leader: Thank you; but it's you girls who have made the class a success, with your wit and your responsiveness and your ready sympathy. What you have just said makes me think of a question I am going to ask: Do you think of your story or of your audience?

Class: My story!
My audience!
Both!

Leader: There seems to be a difference of opinion. My own experience is that I tell a story best when I forget my audience in my tale. At first the audience presses itself upon me, and I have to get in touch with it. Without that, one might as well tell a story to oneself. But once the connection between story-teller and audience is made, then, if you get sufficiently enthralled in your story, you will forget you have an audience.

Cynic: Some one of the audience may not let himself be forgotten.

Leader: True! And that one child out of harmony may have to be won back by being addressed by name, as if he were the only listener, or be caught into the tide of the tale by the magnetism of the story-teller, directed toward him. But once in, he wants to be forgotten, you want to be forgotten — the tale's

the thing! And the movement of the story is the compelling force. Living in your tale, as you do when at your best, your audience lives in it, and forgets you in your story. That's what you want — the story remembered, yourself forgotten. The affected story-teller's idea is the reverse — herself remembered as story-teller.

Diffidence: In regard to that preliminary getting in touch with your audience, would you advise asking questions of the children? I have had disastrous results from doing that. Once I was telling the story of the Good Samaritan, and when I described approaching footsteps I was impelled to ask, "And what do you suppose was coming?" "A circus!" cried one urchin, and you can guess that the arrival of a mere Good Samaritan proved a disappointment.

Leader: That reminds me of a message in "The Madness of Philip," where a visitor was telling a story of a kitten to kindergarten children. She said, "'Now, cats don't like water, do they? What do they like?'

"'Mice,' said Joseph Zukoffsky, abruptly.

"'Well, yes, they do; but there were no mice in my yard. I'm sure you know what I mean. If they don't like *water* what *do* they like?

"'Milk,' cried Sarah Fuller, confidently.

"'They like a dry place,' said Mrs. R. B. Smith."[1]

Quick-as-a-Flash: And yet there are questions

[1] From *The Madness of Philip,* Josephine Daskam Bacon. Published by D. Appleton & Company. Used by permission.

that claim the cooperation of one's audience and allow them to help work up the climax.

Leader: For instance?

Quick-as-a-Flash: The two boys looked behind the tree. Do you suppose they found the creature that they had heard growling? They looked up the hill. Was he there? Then they remembered the cave behind, and with beating hearts they peered into the blackness. What did they see?

Cynic: But suppose they go and answer?

Quick-as-a-Flash: Let them. No or Yes will not in the least disturb me, but rather add to the interest in the *dénouement*. And you notice I kept them from too wide a range of choice in my last question, by telling them it was a growling creature.

Diffidence: This strikes me as the same sort of cooperation as that of my children, when I told the story of the Good Shepherd. I said, "He called the lost sheep, and listened, and after a while he heard a faint, far away — " and to my delight a little girl baa-ed softly. "He went nearer," I continued, "and the cry grew louder" — another *baa* — "and louder" — and then a piercing *baa* recalled to me the fact that the men's class was on the other side of a door none too tight, and might object to having their meditations interrupted with pastoral sounds!

Ready-to-Try: When I want my children to join in, I just stop, leaving the sentence incomplete.

Diffidence: That's the way I do with the old stories that we tell together, and my children's

quaint phraseology is wonderfully cunning. They get the point, too, every time, but not often in "book language." However, they usually do repeat catchy phrases verbatim.

Leader: Phrases are great helps to effectiveness. Miss Shedlock speaks of "the judicious art of pausing." Let me turn to her discussion on the point, which is worth quoting. Here it is:

> In Hans Christian Andersen's "Princess and the Pea," the King goes down to open the door himself. Now, one may make this point in two ways. One may say either, "And then the King went to the door, and at the door there stood a real Princess," or "And then the King went to the door, and at the door there stood — (pause) — a real Princess."
>
> It is difficult to exaggerate the difference of effect produced by so slight a pause. (There must be no more emphasis in the second manner than the first.) With children it means an unconscious curiosity which expresses itself in a sudden muscular tension. There is just time during that instant's pause to *feel,* though not to *formulate,* the question: "What is standing at the door?" By this means, half your work of holding the attention is accomplished.[2]

Quick-as-a-Flash: Let's try it in Bible incidents. I'll begin with the Baby Moses story. The princess saw something strange on the water. What could it

[2] *The Art of the Story-teller,* Marie Shedlock. Published by D. Appleton & Company. Used by permission.

be? She sent one of her maids to get it. It was — a baby boy!

Ready-to-Try: Once there was a man named — Joseph.

Cynic: Poor! There's no point in getting an audience wrought up over a name, and then producing such an uninteresting one as Joseph. If the hero bore an exciting name, like Jack the Giant Killer, or a descriptive name, like Little Red Riding Hood, or a funny name, like Br'er Rabbit, a pause might be in order; but I'd never pause before Joseph or Jacob or John.

Leader: Think of some other good place for a pause in the story of Joseph.

Ready-to-Try: The brothers looked up into the face of the great man who was so kind to them. Where had they seen that face before? They knew now. The great man was — Joseph.

Cynic: Hands up! We're even! It's all right to pause before the name in that case. Now I'll try. David looked across to the hill in front, from which the terrible call had come, and there, half way down, glittering in brass stood — a giant.

Diffidence: Jacob dreamed, and in his dream he saw — a ladder, and up and down the ladder went angels.

Sluggard: Pauses are right in my line. Moses stretched out his rod. (*Pause, while all wonder what will happen.*) A strong wind blew the water to one

side and the other, and there was a path straight across.

Leader: You have the idea. Now come next time prepared to tell one of your favorite Bible stories, for the particular age you like best for an audience.

XVII

BIBLE STORIES

Leader: Now we are ready to enjoy the Bible stories. Who will tell the first one?

Ready-to-Try: Mine is the Easter story for children four years old.

Diffidence: What do you mean by the Easter story?

Ready-to-Try: The story of Christ's resurrection, of course.

Diffidence: For babies of four?

Ready-to-Try: Oh, I tell it in words of one syllable!

Diffidence: That doesn't help, if the story idea is beyond them. And I feel certain that this is. I've tried it again and again — thought I had to, that I'd somehow been betraying the Christian religion if I did not tell the story of Christ's resurrection each Easter. But I was always dissatisfied. The children were attentive, for I took pains to tell it dramatically in simple language; but the trouble was that from this story they did not get the meaning of Easter — immortality. So I gave it up.

Ready-to-Try: And I withdraw my story.

Cynic: I have prepared the Baby Moses for junior boys.

Chorus: Oh, *no!*
I protest!
Why did you choose *that?*
And for boys, especially!

Cynic: I am not so easily converted as the previous story-teller. I am *not* convinced that this story is inappropriate, and I do *not* withdraw it. I demand a hearing!

Class: We accede.
Out of pure curiosity, in my case.

Cynic: It will not be the conventional story and possibly not permissible, but I offer it as a challenge.

Quick-as-a-Flash: You're whetting our appetite very cleverly. Do begin before we become too ravenous to know what we are getting.

Cynic (*tells her story*):

A tall workman hurried into his home and, with a frightened look behind him, closed the door.

"Stop his cries!" he said, in a low, stern voice. "The taskmaster is not far off. You know that it means drowning, if he hears one wail in a Hebrew home."

From an inner room came the sound of an infant's smothered cry, and a woman's song that in English might read,

"Hush ye! Hush ye!
The Pharaoh will get ye!"

Footsteps were heard coming nearer, and again the door opened. This time a girl entered, saying in a scared voice, "'Tis the taskmaster!" She began to laugh and talk loudly, drowning out the child's wails, till the footsteps grew fainter and finally ceased.

"It is no longer possible to hide him, his cries grow so lusty," said the mother, appearing from an inner room with a beautiful boy of three months. "I have thought of another way of saving him. See!" and she pointed to a freshly woven basket of reeds, plastered with pitch, and within a soft blanket. "Tomorrow at the princess' bathing hour I shall place the child in the water in this basket. And you, Miriam, hidden among the reeds on the river-bank, shall watch over him."

"'Tis our only hope in a desperate case," said the father. "Three more Hebrew babies were thrown into the river today by the king's officers, and the taskmaster uses his whip more freely. The princess is said to have a tender heart. Think you, did she rescue him, we would lose all claim on him?"

"I have thought of that," said the mother, "and, Miriam, you are to offer to get a nurse for the princess' child — a nurse who will maybe take him home and care for him."

"A God-given plan!" said the father. "May he prosper it!"

Early next morning the princess went down to the river for her bath, with her maids attending her. As she passed an unusually thick clump of reeds, she little thought that they hid a girl who eagerly watched her, praying that the basket upon the water might not escape her notice. Looking up at that instant, the princess saw the strange floating object.

"Bring it here, that I may see what the basket contains," she ordered a maid.

Miriam, leaning forward, saw her face as she bent over the crying child and said, "He is one of the Hebrew children."

"She loves him," said Miriam, coming out from her hiding place and standing near at hand.

The princess turned from the baby to the girl, who seemed to have sprung up out of the ground and who eagerly asked, "Shall I go and call thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?"

"Go," the princess replied.

Joyfully Miriam ran home to tell the waiting mother the news and to bring her back.

"Take this child away and nurse it for me," said the princess to the happy mother. "I will give thee thy wages."

The mother smiled at the idea of getting money for taking care of her own baby. Thankfully she took him from the basket — the basket she herself had woven — and, clasping him tightly in her arms, carried him home.

When the tall Hebrew workman came home that night he heard his child's crows and laughter with no silencing on the mother's part. The taskmaster was feared no longer, for he would not dare to hurt the ward of the king's daughter. The child was as safe in his Hebrew home as though he were in the palace.

It was a grateful family that met at the evening meal.

"Praise be to God," said Miriam, "that one Hebrew maiden is permitted a living baby brother! My brother Moses. That is the name chosen by the princess, meaning 'to draw out,' because she drew him out of the water."

"Praise be to God," said the father, "that the whip of the taskmaster shall never cut that delicate body!"

"Praise be to God," said the mother, "that during his babyhood I can have my child with me! I well know that it will not be long before I must give him up to the princess,

and that he will receive an Egyptian education in the palace. But what is that compared to offering him to the blackness of the cruel river? And methinks it may be that the Lord God of the Hebrews has saved him for a purpose. Who knows but that the Hebrew boy may come out of the king's palace to be the savior of his people?"

And next Sunday I will tell you whether or not the mother's prophecy came true.

Class: Splendid!

As interesting to juniors as though the hero was not an infant!

You've made the tale full of thrills.

Diffidence: I dislike to figure as a carping critic, but I am very much against tampering with classic or Bible tales, and I think you have tampered with this familiar story, told in Exodus in some dozen verses.

Ready-to-Try: We decided it was permissible to paint in the background.

Diffidence: But she has added conversation and scenes that are purely imaginary.

Quick-as-a-Flash: I agree in detesting the very common practice of changing familiar tales, just as I am ready to leave the theater when a book I love is altered in being put upon the stage. But it seems to me that in this particular case it has been done artistically and with judgment. Introducing the taskmaster, ready to spy upon a crying Hebrew infant, makes the cruelty of the oppression very real; and I believe it is entirely within keeping that a mother, of

such a religious nation, should ascribe her son's rescue to God and foretell his mission. And then this ending paves the way so splendidly for the following stories of Moses.

Cynic: That is, if one is permitted to tell others, and not forced to skip over to the New Testament to another story on the subject of helping God to care. I hate that method.

Diffidence: Not for little children. It's the only legitimate connection for them. With juniors it's different. As you say, they want and should be given chronological stories.

Leader: It's the greatest compliment you could give to the efficacy of this class that you can argue understandingly. I shall not attempt to influence you, except to say this — that I do believe the matter of age has an important bearing. Children's first Bible stories should be given simply, and strictly following the Bible narrative, though not in Bible phraseology. Any elaboration should be to make graphic the setting that adults' wider knowledge unconsciously supplies. With older children this elaboration will take the form of making vivid the mental states of the characters and the influence of the times. That was done in this story. That makes such tales as *The Other Wise Man* and *Ben Hur* wonderful interpretations of the Bible, only first one should be perfectly familiar with the narrative as it stands.

Diffidence: Only let's be wary and test any sort of elaboration severely, for I've seen some tales told

as Bible stories for which it would puzzle a Bible student to find the foundation.

Leader: We shall have time for one more Bible story.

Diffidence tells the story of the Good Shepherd, as told in the Beginners' Course.[1]

Leader: A Bible story that always appeals to little children. We will discuss it at the next class. Then I shall want the remaining Bible stories; and please bring me a list of books on story-telling, and sources for stories. For that will be our final class, and I hope the work we have done together will lead you to read and study and practice by yourselves.

[1] *Church School Closely Graded Courses,* Beginners', Part 2, teacher's edition. Published by The Pilgrim Press.

XVIII

A FINAL STORY AND STORY SOURCES

Leader: I want to pass on a criticism I have heard about the last Bible story told a fortnight ago. It is that as this parable was told by Jesus to teach the saving of a sinner, to make it a lesson on kindness to animals is distorting its original meaning.

Cynic: Well, isn't there something in that?

Diffidence: No; I think not, decidedly. Mrs. Houghton, in her book, *Telling Bible Stories*, shows clearly how children of varying ages read different meanings into the same tales. We all know that most tales contain more than one "truth," so-called, and for little children this may be quite dissimilar to that for older children. Then, too, they may grow into a fuller understanding of one truth. Now, in order to interpret this parable sympathetically, one must enter into the feeling of the surface story. That's as far as little children can go. Their first step toward appreciating the inner teaching of the parable must be to feel keenly the tender care of the shepherd for his sheep.

Quick-as-a-Flash: And a perfectly justifiable first use of this story. Your argument is conclusive to me, at least.

Leader: Now we will have another Bible story.

Sluggard tells the parable of the Good Samaritan in the exact Bible language, and with deep feeling.

Class: Splendidly done!
She made the Bible words live.
Short but impressive.

Cynic: She used the opposite method from mine, and it succeeded, partly because the Bible narrative is simply told and the incidents require no explanation.

Diffidence: Except for little children. They would get nothing from the story told in that way.

Sluggard: I didn't intend it for them. I confess I took this story because it is easier for me to commit to memory than to adapt a tale.

Leader: However, you took great pains with your presentation; and the deep impression you made came from living in the story yourself. Now for the last Bible story.

Quick-as-a-Flash: I shall try to give, in one story, a general impression of Jesus. I felt that our teaching is for the most part very scrappy, and that through our method of telling single incidents on single Sundays, our children get no real picture of him. This would be told to children who have heard in detail many incidents in his life, as a review, or at a special service, to make him seem real.

Leader: That sounds unique and interesting.

Quick-as-a-Flash: We will suppose that by Christmas songs and Scripture reading, the children have had their attention called to Jesus' birth and

boyhood. Then I tell the following, illustrating it with large pictures, which I show after each incident is related, and put down before proceeding:

It was thirty years since the night of the Christ-child's birth. The shepherds who had watched on the hillside had grown old. Each night the sky was filled with stars, but no one knew which one had led the Wise-men across the sands with gifts to Bethlehem. The boy who had surprised the temple teacher with his questions eighteen years before had gone back to Nazareth to learn to be a carpenter.

And then, suddenly, people began talking about a man who traveled from one village to another, doing wonderful deeds. They said he cured sick people — so sick that doctors had given them up. They said he preached and sinners changed their ways. They said he told such fascinating stories that those who listened hardly breathed. A little band of men traveled with him, and it was said they had given up their homes and business to be with this man. Some were fishermen, and the story went that early one morning, as they returned from a night's fishing trip with not a single fish to show for their pains, this man had said, "Pull out into the deep, and let down your nets!" and the fish had rushed into the nets so that they had broken. It was said that because of this the fishermen had left fish and nets and father and home, to be his chosen band, and that they had called others, till there were twelve men ready to die for him.

You have already guessed that this man was the same Jesus who was born a babe at Bethlehem. "Isn't this the carpenter's son?" people asked.

A nobleman came to him and said, "Come down, before

my boy dies!" Jesus said, "Go home; your son will live," and when the father reached home he found his boy alive and well. Blind men were led to him. Some people were carried to him. Sick children were put in his path. And he cured them, every one.

Once he rubbed wet earth on a blind man's eyes and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam," and when he had washed he saw, for the first time in his life, the world he lived in — the blue sky, the green grass, the faces of people. Once ten lepers stood outside a village they were not allowed to enter, and cried, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" All he said was, "Go, show yourselves to the priests," but on the way they felt suddenly that they were well. Why, he even brought life back to a girl who had died!

Do you wonder that every one talked about Jesus? Do you wonder that every one wanted to see him? Do you wonder that when he passed through one village the crowds were so great that a short man climbed a tree in order to get a glimpse of him?

Mothers told their children stories about him, and when he came near enough they brought the children to him. His band of friends said, "Do not let the children trouble the Master," but Jesus left the grown people to come to the children and take them in his arms. Once he tried to go across the lake to rest, but by the time he got there, the people had hurried around the shore to meet him. When suppertime came his band of friends said, "Send them away!"; but he felt so sorry for them, in that lonely place without supper, that he made a boy's lunch of bread and fishes enough for them all. Once the room where he preached was so full that four men who brought a sick man

on a bed had to let him down through the roof to get him to Jesus. And Jesus not only made him well but made him good.

As I told you, wherever Jesus went, his band of friends went too. He was poor and so were they, but what did it matter? How they loved him! He was gentle, and shy children came to him. How proud they were of him! He was afraid of nothing. They heard him talk sternly to rich men who pretended to be good but were really bad.

They believed he was the greatest man on earth. How gladly they would have made him king! They almost thought he would be made king one day when he rode into the city on a colt, and men and women and children threw green branches in his path and shouted,

> "Hosanna to the son of David:
> Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord;
> Hosanna in the highest!"

But Jesus slipped away from the people. He had no wish to be king, with a crown and a throne and a scepter. The next day he was found in the temple — doing what? Touching the eyes of blind men so that they saw, and curing the lame so that they threw away their sticks. Children gathered round, watching him, and they broke out again into the song,

> "Hosanna to the son of David:
> Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord;
> Hosanna in the highest!"

And when men tried to hush the children he said, "There are no songs so pleasing to me as the songs of praise the

children sing." For Jesus wished to be king of people's hearts, ruling with a scepter of love.

Leader: I congratulate you. And now for the book lists which will close our last story class.

Class: Not the last for always!

We'll meet another year.

And in the meantime practice story-telling whenever we can find a child.

And never let a possible story escape us in our reading.

We'll dedicate ourselves to the task of Bringing the Story to the Child.

STORY SOURCES

For Children under Four

Mother Goose Rhymes
Peter Rabbit, Potter
Object Lessons for the Cradle Roll, Danielson
The Three Bears, The Three Pigs, The Old Woman and her Pig } in *How to Tell Stories to Children,* Bryant

For Children Four to Seven

ETHICAL

Mother Stories, More Mother Stories, Lindsay
For the Children's Hour, Bailey and Lewis
Tell It Again, Emerson and Dillingham

ENTERTAINING

For the Children's Hour, Bailey and Lewis
Tell It Again, Emerson and Dillingham
Story-Telling Time, The Pilgrim Press
Just-So Stories, Kipling

For Children Eight to Twelve

ETHICAL

The Golden Windows, Richards
Why the Chimes Rang and Other Stories, Alden
Ethics for Children, Cabot
The Story-Teller, Lindsay
Missionary Story Sermons, Story Sermons, Kerr
Course in Citizenship, Hill and Cabot

ENTERTAINING

Story-Telling, Lyman
The Animal School, Danielson
Fairy Tales, Andersen
How to Tell Stories to Children, Stories to Tell to Children, Bryant
Tales of Laughter, Wiggin

STORY–TELLING

How to Tell Stories to Children, Bryant
Picture Work, Hervey
The Art of the Story-Teller, Shedlock
Stories and Story-Telling, St. John

BOOKS LISTING STORIES

Story Index, Salisbury and Beckwith
Ethical Story List, Pittsburgh Library
Ethics for Children, Cabot
Manual of Stories, Forbush
Story-Telling, Questioning and Studying, Horne
Stories to Tell to Children, Bryant
A Guide to Books for Character, Starbuck and others
A Guide to Literature for Character Training, Starbuck and Shuttleworth